Lacson big security threat, says Corpus

Story on Page A2

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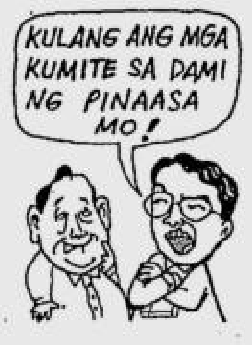
A 'promising' Speaker?

By G.G. Lacuarta and R. Nazareno

REP. Jose de Venecia of Pangasinan is a "promising" Speaker of the House of Representatives, not because of his leadership qualities but because of his propen-

A PROMISING/ A6


KULANG ANG MGA KUMITE SA DAMI NG PINAASA MO!

Erap slams Gloria for prejudging case

GMA allies also hit plan to commute death sentence

By Donna S. Cueto and Christian V. Esguerra

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday drew heavy fire from Joseph Estrada, lawmakers and militant groups for saying she would probably commute her predecessor's death sentence if he were to be convicted of the capital crime of plunder and sentenced to die by lethal injection.

Estrada, contacted by phone at the military hospital where he was being detained, said Ms Macapagal made the statement because a conviction in his plunder case in the Sandiganbayan is imminent.

"This is again conditioning the mind of the people that I will be convicted," the ousted President told the Inquirer.

Asked if he felt insulted by his successor's remarks, he said: "Yes . . . this is an insult because I (have not gotten a fair hearing) from the Senate blue ribbon committee, the impeachment (court), and now the Sandiganbayan."

In an interview with Japanese journalists in Malacañang on Saturday, Ms Macapagal said she would not pardon Estrada if he were convicted, but added that she might commute his death sentence to life imprisonment, to be consistent with her personal stand against the death penalty.

"No, no. I will not pardon. Maybe, I will commute the death sentence like I commute everybody else's death sentence. But I will not pardon," the President said, according to a transcript obtained by the Inquirer from one of the Japanese journalists who interviewed her.

Ms Macapagal added: "Maybe I will commute the death sentence to life imprisonment because I've been commuting death sentences of other death convicts. So it will only be consistent with what (I have done)," she said.

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao yesterday confirmed the accuracy of the transcript.

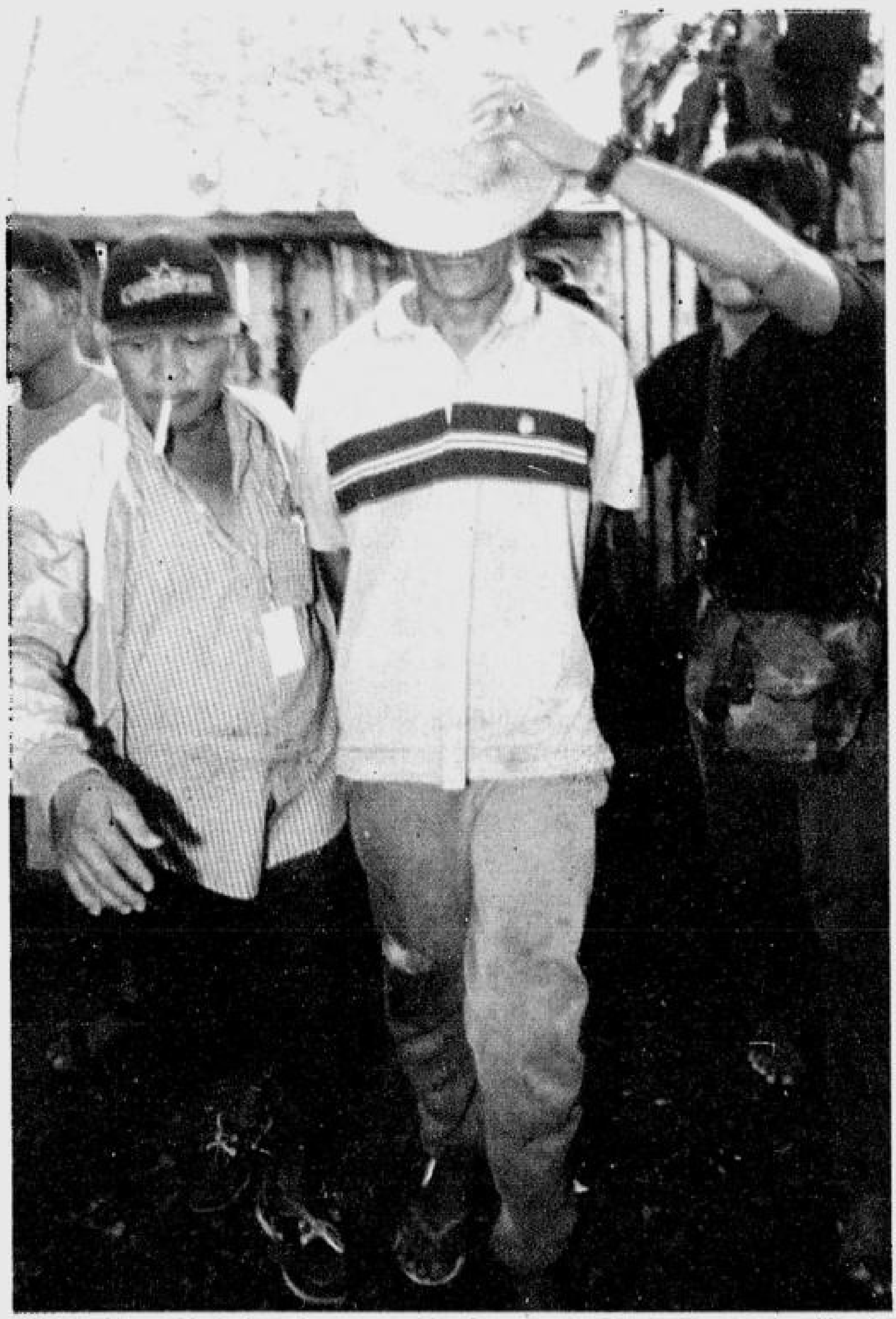
"She won't pardon if ever Estrada is convicted. But she will commute. Yes," he said, reiterating that the move would be consistent with the President's anti-death penalty stance.

But Satur Ocampo, who will represent Bayan Muna in the 12th Congress, said he was told by his lawyer that the Constitution prohibits the commutation of an impeachable offense such as plunder.

Estrada lawyer Rene Saguisag said the President was being "presumptuous."

"We don't need any special favors," the

ERAP/ A20


DENNIS SABANGAN

POLICE officers hide the face of a suspected Abu Sayyaf leader, listed as No. 12 in the military's Order of Battle, who was arrested in Basilan and brought to Zamboanga City on Sunday.

Crackdown drains pond of 'terrorist fish'–AFP

By Carlito Pablo, Julie Alipala-Inot, Philip C. Tubeza and Donna S. Cueto

"WE'RE draining the pond that supports the terrorist fish," military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan said of the ongoing crackdown on supporters of the Abu Sayyaf.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said she hoped the crackdown against the Abu Sayyaf bandits would help prop up the economy.

But the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the militant group Sanlakas warned that the indiscriminate arrest of suspects could provide the bandit group with more recruits.

Seven more people, including a barangay official, were arrested in Maluso town in Basilan on Saturday.

Maj. Alberto Gepilano, the Joint Task Force Comet's civil-military operations officer, said four of those arrested had been "positively identified" as Abu Sayyaf members. They were Isniruddin Dagayasan, Ottoh Hapikin, Kamman Abdurahman and Nimrod Abubakar.

Also arrested were three suspected supporters of the bandit group—Jalil Sansawi, Ibno Nasser Adasi and Sipad Antonio, barangay chair of Puente Maluso in Maluso.

Adan said the wave of arrests was directed not only at the civilian network of the group but also at leaders and members hiding in communities to evade military operations in the

CRACKDOWN/ A20

Militants rap GMA 'apathy' on wage issue

By Christian V. Esguerra and Philip C. Tubeza

KEY players of People Power II from the Left are threatening to turn their backs on President Macapagal-Arroyo for allegedly ignoring calls for an across-the-board wage increase of P125 nationwide.

Sammy Malunes, spokesperson of the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) labor center, said the militant groups that played key roles in the peaceful anti-Estrada revolution in January were disappointed over Ms Macapagal's "apathy" on the wage increase issue.

"She should remember that we're part of the movement that catapulted her to power, so she should not ignore us now," he told the Inquirer.

"When she was still courting our support, she was shaking our hands and making a lot of promises. But how come she's ignoring our pleas, now that she's gotten what she wanted?" Malunes asked.

Workers nationwide and other sectors led by the party-list groups Bayan Muna and Akbayan, the militant fisherfolk group Pamalakaya and the KMU will greet Ms Macapagal with a work stoppage when she delivers her State of the Nation Address on July 23.

The groups are pushing for a legislated wage increase.

Farmers and workers from Central and Southern Luzon are also expected to join a "rural folk exodus" to Congress in Quezon City.

In a statement, the President yes-

MILITANTS/ A21

Alert up on imported soy sauce

GO easy on those soy, oyster and fish sauces—especially the imported ones. They may contain a cancer-causing chemical.

Trade Secretary Mar Roxas II yesterday warned consumers against using 22 brands of seasonings and sauces from China, Taiwan, Thailand, Hong Kong and Singapore amid reports that they contain high levels of 3-MCPD.

Roxas issued the alert after Britain's Food Standards Agency had warned that high levels of 3-MCPD could cause cancer if taken daily.

Australia and New Zealand have joined Britain in banning the importation of 22 brands from the four countries.

Malaysia, on the other hand, has ordered the 22 products under 11 brands pulled out of groceries and

ALERT/ A20

'Robot' also wanted in Germany

By Donna S. Cueto and Carlito Pablo

COMMANDER Robot is wanted not only in the Philippines, but now in Germany as well. The Philippine government, however, is not ready to give him up if it catches him.

A court in north Germany has issued an arrest warrant for Abu Sayyaf leader Galib Andang alias Commander Robot and his cousin, Mujib Susukan, for kidnapping a German family during last year's Sipadan hostage crisis, the German weekly Der Spiegel reported in its July 16 edition.

The court in Goettingen issued the warrant for Andang and Susukan earlier this month, according to an Agence France Presse report on the German article.

German security authorities are on the lookout for the cousins in case they flee the Philippines, Der Spiegel said.

Renate and Werner Wallert, from Goettingen, and their son Marc, 27, were taken hostage along with 18 other people, mostly foreigners, on the Malaysian island of Sipadan on April 23, 2000, and taken to Jolo.

The Wallerts did not file a case against Andang and Susukan, according to the Der Spiegel report. Local prosecutors in Geottingen instead initiated an ongoing investigation, and the arrest warrant was ordered in aid of the probe.

Malacañang yesterday said the government's criminal case against Andang takes priority over the German court case.

There are warrants of arrest already is-

ROBOT/ A20

Racists in Australia not usually violent

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE GHASTLY murder of Filipino lawyer Teddy Gonzales, his wife Lowiva and their 18-year-old daughter Clodine in Sydney is probably the most shocking crime that has ever visited the Filipino community in Australia, now numbering tens of thousands.

The report of a racist hate message scrawled in the victims' blood and left behind in their home immediately raises the issue of Australian racism. Australian police have not revealed the exact words of the message. They are investigating several possible angles, not excluding racism but including elements such as work or professional relationships, or even a break-in.

I should not be understood as proposing a theory of crime solution.

There is, of course, a rise in racist-inspired violence in some parts of the world, such as in Germany where there have been reports of violence on migrants, particularly Turks, by neo-Nazi thugs or skin-heads.

Although there are also red necks in Australia, racism has not taken the vicious, violent character of, for example, the Ku Klux Klan in the American South.

Australian racism is expressed not so much in violence but in discrimination against migrants in job and promotion opportunities. Hate is not a component of Australian racism.

Because of this mainly non-violent background of the profile of Australian racism, the murder of the Gonzales family—a wholesale massacre at that—is one of a kind, as far as the Filipino community in Australia is concerned. And the outrage is even unusual in the context of crimes in that country.

I would, therefore, be very reluctant in feeding the racial issue as an explanation and we are better advised to wait for facts uncovered in the investigation by the Australian police.

If I know them, the police are competent and thorough in criminal investigation. They are not reckless in feeding the press with tentative information that only fans speculation.

To say that Filipinos are not the usual victims of ethnic discrimination against Asian migrants because they are "different" from other Asians is a wrong assumption.

The average Australian can't differentiate a Filipino from a Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese or Korean. As far as the average Australian is concerned, any-

RACISTS/ A20

OLD WOMAN AND THE SEA

Times are indeed trying, more so for this woman who, despite her age, must give her best effort in hauling in the day's catch for her family's meal in Aparri, Cagayan.

IKAW TALAGA ANG DINIDIIN, PINGI

Lacson big security threat–Corpus

By Carlito Pablo

MILITARY intelligence chief Col. Victor Corpus is laying his career on the line, if that is what it will take to get a controversial senator.

"The country is faced with a big national security threat in the person of (Sen. Panfilo) Lacson," said Corpus, without elaborating.

Determined to stand by witness Angelo Mawanay, alias Ador, whose revelations against Lacson have been met by either jeers, cynicism or guarded acceptance, Corpus knows he is facing a bruising battle.

"The demolition job has started," said Corpus. "They're going to tear me apart."

Already, Lacson has alleged that Corpus was the "handler" of Ador in what he claimed was a government campaign to bring him down.

Corpus believes that sooner or later serious crimes imputed to Lacson, including murder and kidnapping, will be brought to light.

"I'm prepared to sacrifice my career for this," said Corpus who has rebuilt his military career after an absence of more than a decade when he defected to the Communist Party and its military arm, the New People's Army, in the early 1970s.

"I'm staking (my military career) on the side of truth and what is right," Corpus said.

With a recently acquired metal detector, Corpus' men at the Intelligence Service of the AFP continue to search the lahar dunes of Pampanga for the metal drum- and cement-encased remains of missing casino employee Edgar Bentain.

Corpus said the Isafp will be enlisting the assistance of the military corps of engineers to prove Ador's allegation that Bentain was abducted and buried alive on Lacson's orders by members of the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force.

Corpus also said the Isafp continues to validate other allegations against Lacson who has been tagged by persons other than Ador in other illegal activities.

"This is what I can say to Lacson: we'll just have to see each other in court," Corpus said.

While other officers who are graduates of the Philippine Military Academy can turn to their "mistahs" (classmates) who are also in the active service when faced with problems, Corpus is the only member of Class 1967 still in the Army rolls.

"I'm the only one that's left," said Corpus whose classmates included former police director generals Santiago Aliño, Edmundo Larroza and Roberto Lastimoso.

Other Corpus classmates are former Lt. Gen. Edgardo Espinosa whom President Macapagal-Arroyo almost appointed chief of staff and Maj. Gen. Benjamin Libarnes, a former Isafp chief.

Corpus' post as Isafp chief is a TO (table of organization) position, meaning he has to get his star as a brigadier general.

But his promotion could get snagged in the congressional Commission on Appointments where a Lacson-led opposition can be expected to oppose it.

Also, political expediency could see him being yanked out of the Isafp.

But such concerns are far from Corpus' mind.

Already 56 years old, Corpus has only four more years left in the military.

"I'm scheduled to retire in 2004," Corpus said.

Trained in both Scout Ranger and Special Forces schools, Corpus was a PMA instructor when he defected, taking along with him several firearms from the PMA armory.

He was operating in the jungles of Isabela during the CPP-NPA's failed attempt to land firearms from the MV Karagatan and the rebel court trial of the perpetrators of the infamous Plaza Miranda bombing.

Some accounts say he was captured in the mid-1970s while others claim he surrendered through one of his PMA "mistahs."

He was tried in a military court along with then Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr.

Corpus was commissioned by then President Corazon Aquino as a lieutenant colonel in 1987 following his release from detention in 1986.

Critics said the commission was illegal because he did not then hold a master's degree in national security administration nor had he gone through the General and Command Staff Course.

Corpus, however, completed a master's degree in public administration in 1990 from the prestigious Harvard University.

Corpus' appointment as Isafp chief has riled some hardline officers because of his history.

One officer who was in Isabela during Corpus' time with the rebel movement, said it was Corpus who led a raid on an airstrip there which damaged some military helicopters.

"Isn't there anybody else?" said the officer who asked not to be named.

Following his reinstatement, Corpus wrote several books in which he dealt with communist strategy and tactics.

He also helped in putting together what came to be known as the "Lambat Bitag" counter-insurgency program.

Corpus is a recipient of two distinguished star medals and two bronze crosses.

Before being appointed Isafp chief, he was deputy chief of operations center for the National Peace and Development Plan at the defense department.

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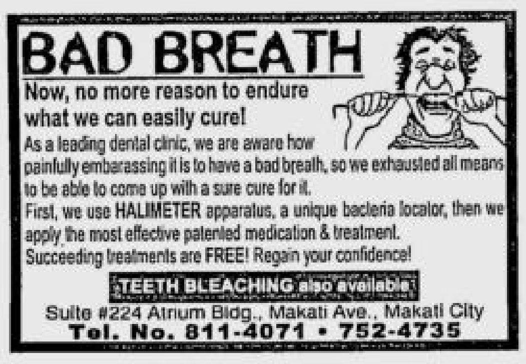
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DILG probe panel clears BJMP chief

THE DEPARTMENT of Interior and Local Government has recommended closing the investigation of the officer in charge of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology for lack of sufficient evidence.

DILG Secretary Jose Lina had ordered the probe of Jail OIC Chief Supt. Arturo W. Alit for alleged falsification of his personnel data sheet, for giving VIP treatment to suspected drug trafficker Yu Yuk Lai, and for alleged anomalies in the food rations to inmates.

The fact-finding committee created by Lina to investigate the charges found that Alit did graduate in 1984 with an AB Political Science degree from the Magsaysay Memorial Colleges in Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat, as he had claimed in his personnel data sheet. This was confirmed by the Commission on Higher Education.

Alit's detractors claimed that during that period he was assigned at Camp Crame and Camp Bagong Diwa in Metro Manila, some 2,000 km away from Tacurong.

Alit's involvement in the VIP treatment of Yu, who is also known as Anita Yu, was not proven after complainant Supt. Renato P. Gacutan failed to submit evidence to substantiate his allegations, despite an order from Lina to do so, the investigating body found.

On allegations of anomalies in the food rations to inmates, the committee found that the complainant had misrepresented himself.

The charge was based on a letter purportedly written by a lawyer named Deogracias Tapayan of Caritas Manila. The probe body learned there was no "Atty. Tapayan" but a Col. Deogracias Tapa-yan, logistics officer of the BJMP, National Capital Region, who denied having written the letter.

Gacutan and JO1 Enrique Ugay, who brought up the same allegations against Alit, continued to press their case, however.

In a press statement, they said the DILG has not cleared the jail officer of any charges.

They said the DILG fact-finding committee investigation has just started and they even testified before it as recently as July 12.

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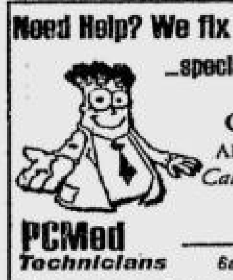

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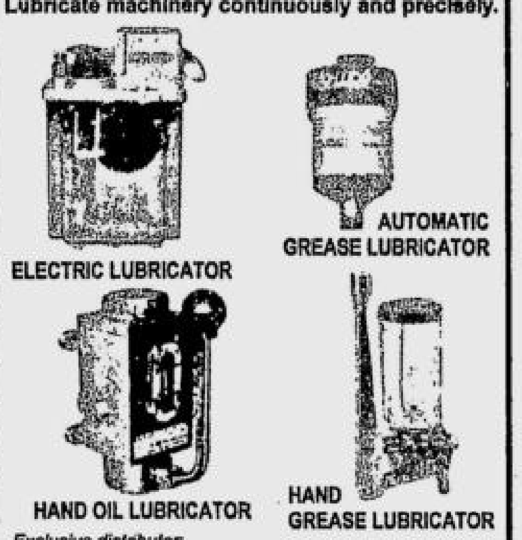

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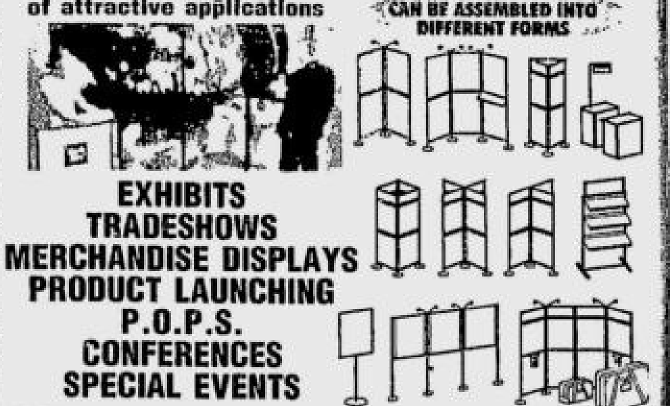

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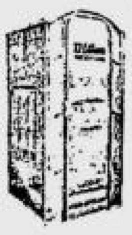

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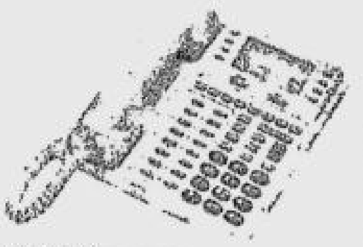

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Farmers to oppose GMO corn field tests

By Cynthia D. Balana

FARMERS said they would protest the government's approval in principle of the field trials of genetically modified corn in several locations nationwide.

The National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines recently approved the application for field tests of Bt corn by the multinational Monsanto in only 10 barangays instead of the proposed 32 sites.

The barangays are located in the provinces of Bukidnon, South Cotabato, Camarines Sur, Pangasinan and Isabela.

Two of the barangays are in South Cotabato where the city council of Koronadal recently approved a resolution declaring the city a GMO-free zone, that is, free of genetically modified organisms.

"The people of South Cotabato are opposed to these field tests of Bt corn," said Sr. Susan Bolanio of the justice and peace desk of the Social Action Center of the Archdiocese of Marbel.

She doubts the field testing of Bt corn in two barangays in the city, Topland and Paraiso, would push through.

The Quezon City-based Southeast Asia Regional Institute for Community Education (SEARICE) said the field test applications were being opposed by organized groups of farmers, consumers and other non-governmental organizations.

It said the groups' position papers were not taken into account by the NCBP whose decision has been submitted to the agriculture department for final approval.

The justice and peace desk of the Marbel archdiocese also vehemently opposed the NCBP decision.

In a press statement, it urged the local government units of South Cotabato to take the initiative to stop the project and oppose the use of Bt corn.

Earlier, a United Nations Development Program released a report claiming that genetic engineering in food is safe and would provide solutions for complex agricultural challenges such as pest control and drought.

The UNDP's Human Development Report said that GMOs would in fact increase yields and nutritional properties of food.

But the international environmental group Greenpeace deplored what it called "ill-advised" pro-biotech prescriptions of the UN as well as the "unsubstantiated" promises of the genetic engineering industry.

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Party-list votes padded by 3.5M

By G. Lacuarta

ONLY 11.4 million voted in the party-list elections but party-list groups have a combined total of 14.9 million votes, the latest canvass report of the Commission on Elections showed.

The discrepancy of more than 3.5 million votes was cited by the Anak Mindanao (Amin) party-list group which yesterday asked the Comelec for an explanation amid reports of vote-padding and shaving even in the party-list elections.

Mujiv Hataman, Amin nominee, said the poll body should be able to determine and explain where the "extra" 3.5 million votes came from.

"This discrepancy, if not corrected, will put the integrity of the party-list elections under serious doubt because this could mean that the vote had been padded by 3.5 million," Hataman said.

Hataman said the number of votes obtained by party-list groups exceeded the number of voters that actually voted in the party-list elections in Regions 3, 4, 6, 7, and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The same record, Party-List Canvass Report No. 24 as of July 4, also showed that the actual number of voters that voted for party-list groups was higher than the total party-list votes in Regions 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Hataman said a higher number of voters indicated that some party-list votes were not counted at all. This would explain the lower number of party-list votes in these areas, he said.

Hataman cited the case of Amin whose 80,000 votes in Tawi-Tawi was not reflected in the latest canvass report, which showed the group getting only 31,458 votes in the entire ARMM.

Hataman claimed that a syndicate in the Comelec was working to cheat Amin of a congressional seat since the 80,000 "missing" votes would have given Amin at least two percent of the votes.

Worse, the actual number of voters which voted in the party-list elections were not indicated for Metro Manila, the Cordillera Administrative Region, Region 12 and the Caraga Region.

Hataman said that without the data on actual number of voters, it would be impossible to determine if the party-list votes for a certain region had been padded or not.

"It would be easy for operators to pad votes in these areas," Hataman said. "Since the total number of voters is not indicated, the sky will be the limit."

Neri Javier Colmenares, counsel for the Bayan Muna, the party-list group that is leading the count, expressed alarm and disbelief when shown the discrepancy in the Comelec canvass report.

Colmenares said he has asked the Bayan Muna staff to tabulate the figures in the Comelec canvass report to confirm the discrepancies.

He said Bayan Muna would then ask the Comelec to reconcile the numbers and make corrections, if necessary.

The Comelec has yet to complete the party list canvass as it is still conducting summary evidentiary hearings on the qualifications of all 162 party-list groups to comply with a Supreme Court ruling that the party-list system should be reserved only for marginalized and under-represented sectors.

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Weak peso sends interest payments soaring by P11.5B

FOR EVERY peso depreciation against the dollar, interest payments on the country's foreign debts increase by P1.15 billion annually.

This was revealed yesterday by Sen. Ralph Recto who said the "amount is equivalent to the annual budget of the Department of Social Welfare and Development."

Recto said interest payments on the government's foreign debts could rise by P11.5 billion this year alone based on an exchange rate of P52:$1. This would bring total interest payments to P59.7 billion this year up from the P48.2 billion projected earlier based on a P42:$1 exchange rate.

If the peso stabilizes at 50 to a dollar, interest payments would cost the government P57.4 billion, up by P9.2 billion over the original projection, he said.

The peso closed at just over P53 to the dollar last Friday.

The original projections based on a P42:$1 exchange rate were contained in budget documents sent by Malacañang to Congress last year, which the legislators branded as too unrealistic based on the behavior of the peso.

Recto said the interest payments on the country's foreign debts were a casualty of the plummeting peso, handcuffing the Macapagal administration and preventing it from properly funding its anti-poverty programs.

Senate bill raises insurance coverage on bank deposits

SENATE minority leader Renato Cayetano (Lakas) has urged the incoming Congress to pass posthaste a bill he has authored increasing insurance coverage on bank deposits.

Cayetano said the measure has become imperative to protect bank depositors in these financially trying times.

"We must increase the insurance coverage on deposits quickly in order to restore public confidence in the banking system and revitalize the national savings effort at this difficult time," Cayetano said.

Cayetano's bill came after the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC) reported that 53,869 depositors with a total of P2.2 billion in deposits lost money in the collapse of 16 banks last year.

The figures did not include the thousands of depositors in eight other failed banks whose accounts have yet to be inventoried.

Cayetano's bill seeks to increase the insurance coverage on bank deposits to P175,000 from the current P100,000.

Under the proposed law, a depositor would receive 100 percent of his account if it held less than P100,000.

For deposits between P100,000 and P250,000, coverage shall be 75 percent of the deposit, provided the depositor shall receive no less than P100,000.

For deposits of P250,000 or more, coverage shall be 50 percent of the deposit, provided the account holder shall receive no less than P175,000.

Currently depositors, regardless of the amount of their deposits, are insured up to P100,000 only.

Cayetano's bill also provides that depositors be paid within 60 days from the date of closure of a bank.

Cayetano's call comes one week ahead of the opening of Congress on July 23.

Bill seeks P350M for 35,000 students

SEN. Manny Villar has filed a bill that would create a financial assistance program to help poor students get a college education.

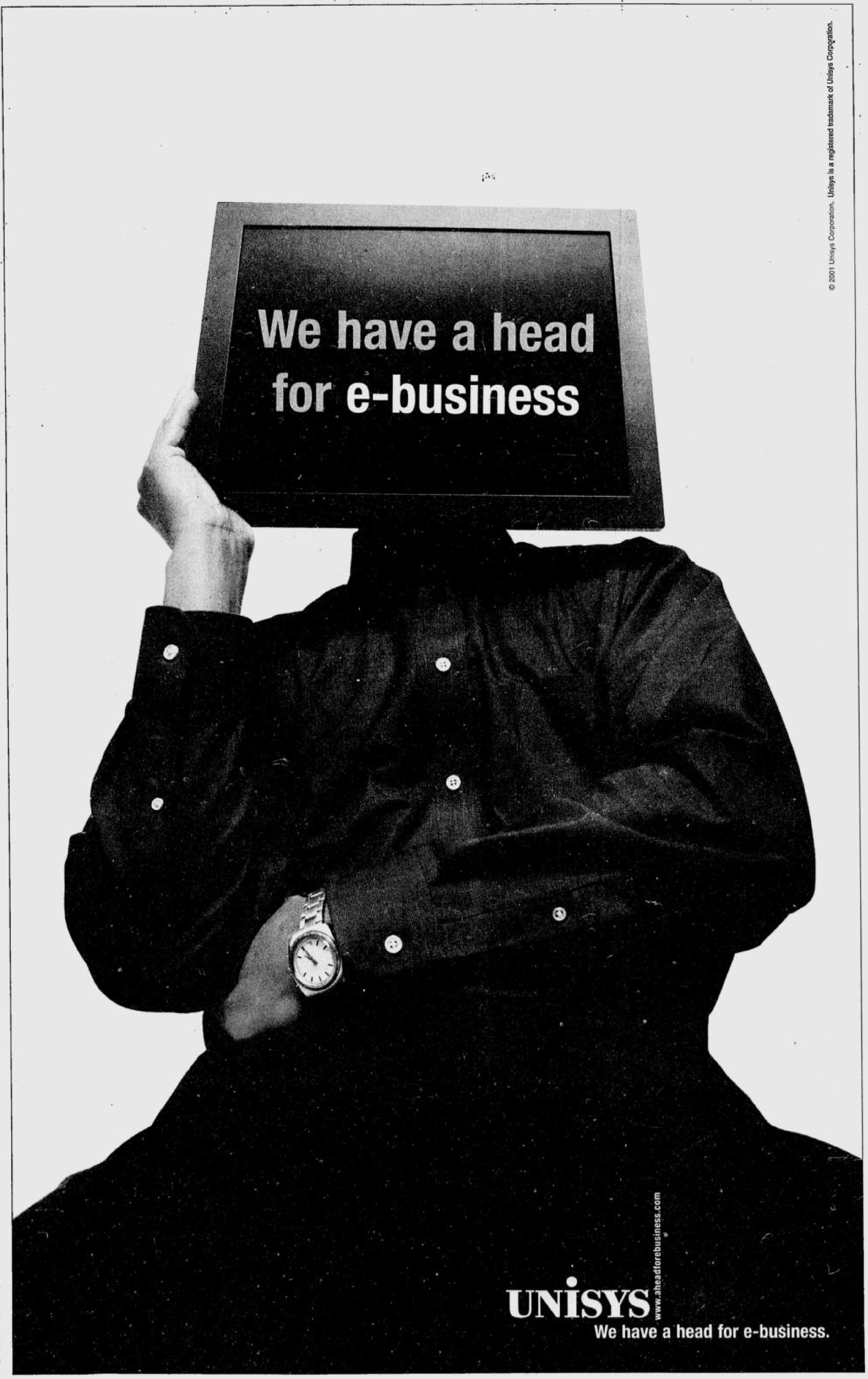
In a press statement yesterday, Villar said that education could help many Filipinos "escape from poverty" and improve their quality of life.

"We must help poor families move up in life by providing them with the needed tools to succeed," said Villar.

The senator cited the lack of a comprehensive program to take care of the mass of secondary school graduates wishing to go on to college studies but unable to do so because of poverty.

The bill proposes to set aside P350 million from the National Treasury to initially underwrite the college education of an initial batch of 35,000 students.

Beneficiaries will be those students who come from families below the poverty line as defined by the National Economic and Development Authority and who have the ability to continue and finish a degree course.



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SENATE PRESIDENCY

Drilon presses talks with senators

By Christine Avendaño

AFTER getting a tacit endorsement from President Macapagal-Arroyo, Sen. Franklin Drilon said yesterday he was continuing to reach out to his colleagues as part of his efforts to retake the top Senate post.

"I have no scheduled talks with (the other contenders), but I continue to seek out my colleagues . . . I have to continue to dialogue (with them)," Drilon told the Inquirer.

Aside from Drilon, those aspiring for the Senate presidency are the incumbent, Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Sen. Renato Cayetano and Sen. Joker Arroyo, all from the administration's People Power Coalition.

Sen. Edgardo Angara, on the other hand, is the lone candidate of the opposition.

Drilon acknowledged that with the opening of the 12th Congress a week away, all 24 senators were being pressured to resolve the Senate leadership and the chairmanships of the Senate committees right away.

"We have to start the work when sessions begin next week," he said.

According to Senate rules, if none of the contenders is able to get 13 votes on July 23, Pimentel retains his position.

Drilon last week met with Cayetano to discuss a possible power-sharing scheme, but the talks failed.

Yesterday, Drilon said he and Cayetano had agreed to review their positions.

But Cayetano, who belongs to a bloc of Lakas senators, is said to be engaged in talks with the bloc of former congressmen who ran and won under the PPC in the senatorial elections. The bloc is led by Arroyo.

Sources have said the two blocs were working to forge an alliance and to resolve the Senate leadership issue between Cayetano and Arroyo.

Drilon's bid for the Senate presidency was given a boost when Ms Macapagal reportedly endorsed him last week.

Asked in a news conference whether she had expressed preference for Drilon, Ms Macapagal said "not in public."

Sen. Loren Legarda, one of the four Lakas senators, said that while the President may have given Drilon her tacit approval, the "other contenders are still bent to pursue their bid."

In Cebu City, Pimentel said Saturday that the scramble among the PPC senators for the Senate presidency was actually good for him.

In fact, it would be better to "add fuel" to the rivalry between PPC senators because it would mean he could keep the leadership in the Senate, he said in Cebuano.

He said neither the PPC nor the opposition will be able to capture the to post because not one of the candidates could get the numbers.

Sen. Juan Flavier, however, said Pimentel should not be too confident because "many things can still happen" between now and up to July 23.

He revealed that right now, there were already talks going on between the camps of Drilon and Angara that could result to "many possibilities." He declined to elaborate. *With a report from Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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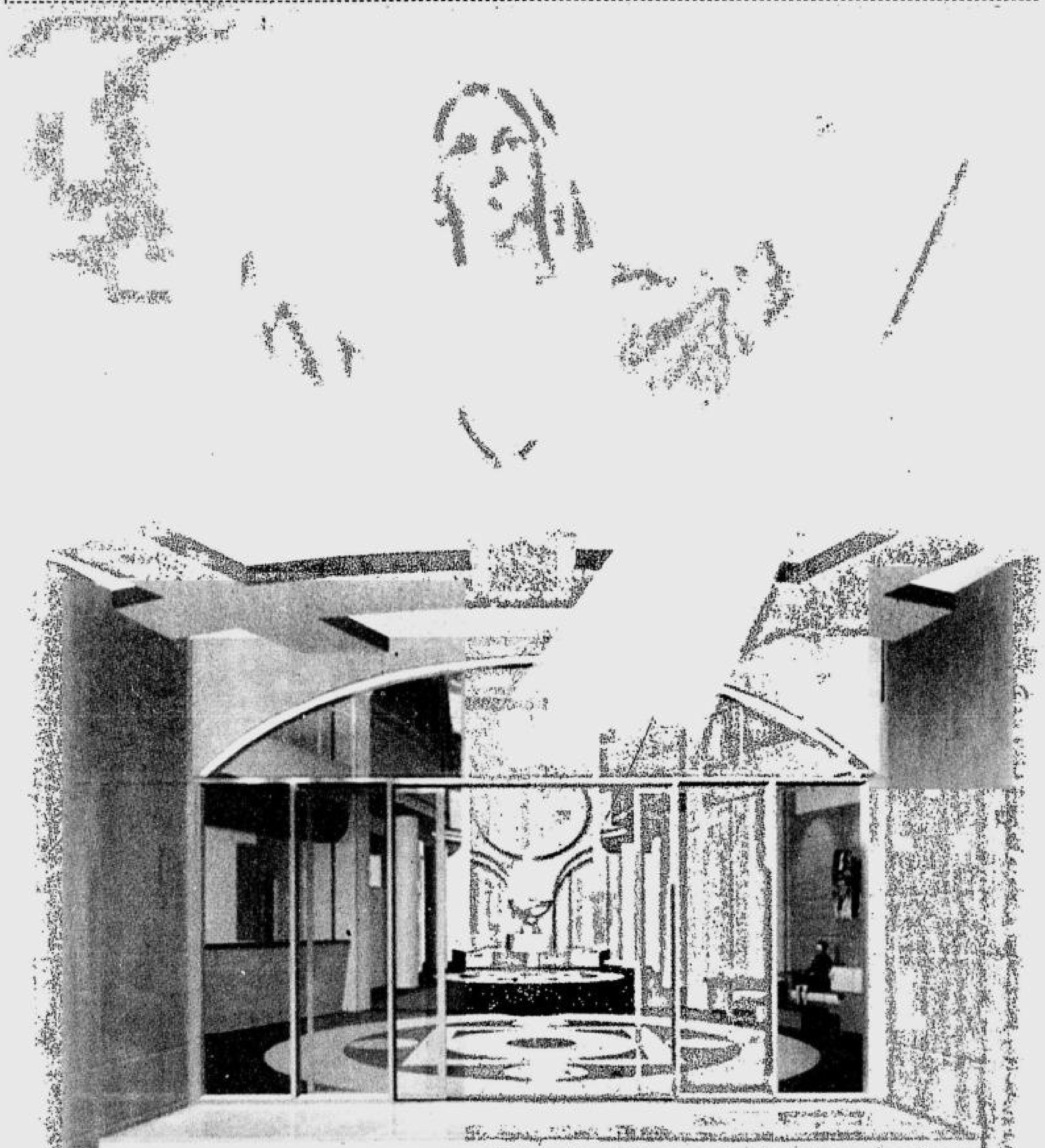

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A 'promising' . . .

(From page A1)

sity to make promises.

This left-handed compliment came from Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino Jr. of Tarlac, a supporter of Rep. Florencio "Butch" Abad of Batanes, who is vying for the top House post. Both Aquino and Abad belong to the Liberal Party (LP).

"If I join the other side (De Venecia) and explain his agenda to the people, I would probably end up in Mandaluyong (where the mental hospital is located)," Aquino said in the recent launching of Abad's candidacy for speakership.

"Abad is not promising. He's one who delivers," Aquino said.

De Venecia had reportedly promised several congressmen the chairmanship of a committee to court their votes in the fight for the speakership at the opening of the 12th Congress on July 23.

Former Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez, who has been campaigning against De Venecia since the 10th Congress, said some congressmen approached by the former Speaker complained that they had been promised chairmanship of the same committees.

Very traditional

"It's really his style to promise everything to everybody. Very traditional," Suarez said.

"If De Venecia becomes Speaker, he may have to split the committee on transportation and communication in two, one for transportation and the other for communication," he said.

"But since he had made so many promises to so many people, he may have to break down the transportation committee into committees for land, sea and air, and the communication committee into committees for fixed broadcast, landline and cellular so he can accommodate all of them," he added.

The LP recently forged an alliance with the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP) to push for Abad's bid for the speakership. As of yesterday, some 75 congressmen had committed their support for Abad. Last week, the number stood at 60.

De Venecia boasts of being assured of 180 votes for the speakership. A total of 106 votes is needed to win.

The LP-LDP alliance reunited Aquino, who sits as LP secretary general, and his uncle, Makati Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino of the LDP.

In the May 14 elections, the LP allied itself with the administration's People Power Coalition while the LDP was with the opposition Puwersa ng Masa.

Swing votes

Suarez said the newly formed pro-Abad coalition had constituted an executive committee tasked with recruiting from among the 65 "uncommitted" members of the House, who could provide the swing votes on July 23.

The committee shall also draw up a "floor strategy" during the election of the Speaker.

Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar, wife of former Speaker Manny Villar, now a senator, had volunteered to talk with other independents to convince them to support Abad.

Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Carlos Padilla, on the other hand, declared that he was withdrawing as LDP candidate for Speaker in favor of Abad.

"I am withdrawing in favor of Abad because I believe he could do something to improve the credibility, image and performance of the House," Padilla said.

Abad noted that the Speaker in the past was already known even weeks before the opening of Congress. Not this time, he said.

"Many of our colleagues have not made up their minds yet," he said. "We can see many developments."

Abad said even President Macapagal-Arroyo had not clearly expressed her choice for Speaker.

He admitted that the President's endorsement would have an influence on the voting for the top House post.

But Abad said "the side most organized to take advantage of opportunities will garner the votes."

"We have to intensify our recruitment campaign and develop a plan on what will happen on the day itself," he said.

Abad said he was confident of getting a sizeable number of votes from the party-list sector, particularly from the progressive groups.

Party-list winners, however, have not been proclaimed because the disqualification cases against 17 groups have yet to be resolved by the Commission on Elections.

The elder Aquino assured the newly formed alliance of the firm commitment of the LDP, although he conceded that a few LDP congressmen were on the other side.

"When I speak of the LDP, I refer to the majority," he said.

Abad, De Venecia meet

On Friday, Abad, De Venecia and Palawan Rep. Vicente Sandoval, also a candidate for Speaker, met at De Venecia's residence in Makati.

It was the first time that Abad agreed to meet with De Venecia to discuss the speakership issue.

Abad was accompanied by LP Representatives Plaridel Abaya of Cavite and Rafael Nantes of Quezon.

Sandoval came with his son, Malabon-Navotas Rep. Federico Sandoval.

At the meeting, De Venecia broached the idea of Abad and the elder Sandoval withdrawing from the race for speakership.

In exchange, Abad would chair the powerful House committee on appropriations and Sandoval would lead the House delegation to the Commission on Appointments for 15 months.

After 15 months, Abad and Sandoval would exchange posts.

"This is just one of the many sacrifices we have to make just to retain the unity in the House," said the young Sandoval.

The Malabon-Navotas congressman has found his affiliation with the Spice Boys of Congress strained since most of its members have already aligned with De Venecia.

Unification of 2 bourses imperiled

THE UNIFICATION of the country's two bourses is imperiled after the Philippine Stock Exchange might not get the land it wants or the money to construct a new building.

The PSE demanded over the weekend that the Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. (FBDC) and Capital Consortium Inc. (CCI) deliver to it the deeds of donation covering properties it had been promised for the bourse in Bonifacio Global City.

The PSE asked both Manuel Pangilinan, FBDC chair, and Ricardo Pascua, CCI president and CEO, to deliver the deeds within 48 hours, as provided under a February 1999 agreement.

In the agreement, the PSE was to relocate its unified trading floor to Bonifacio Global City to spur development of the area and promote it as the country's new financial capital.

In return, FBDC and CCI were to donate a 40,000-sq. m. lot at Capital Place within the city and provide P250 million for the construction of a PSE building by 2001.

Last week, the FBDC and CCI proposed amendments to the agreement, which the PSE rejected.

The FBDC and CCI had proposed the PSE accept another lot outside Capital Place. The two companies also indicated they would no longer construct the building for the PSE.

The PSE said the deeds of donation were long overdue. They cited their deals with Ayala Land and the Ortigas Center, where the two bourses are currently located, in which they received their deeds of donation within a week of the signing of agreements.

The PSE told Pangilinan and Pascua it would not agree to the suggested amendments to their agreement, saying the deal "had been arrived at after a long process of deliberation and evaluation."

"To open (the agreement) to amendments at this time, especially along the lines you have suggested, would be going back to the drawing board," the PSE told Pangilinan and Pascua.

GMA says diplomacy will settle RP-Sino row

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has reiterated that the Philippines would settle its dispute with China over the Spratly group of islands diplomatically, a statement from Malacañang said yesterday.

"What we are trying to do is to have confidence-building measures so that we will approach this measure through diplomatic means," the President said during an interview with Japanese newsmen on Saturday.

She said that despite the existing irritants between the two countries brought about by their competing claims to the Spratlys, both the Philippines and China have greater sources of mutual interest, close friendship and even family ties.

Ms Macapagal also cited economic cooperation, particularly in agriculture.

The President said that since there are other countries staking claim to the various islands in the Spratly group, the government would rather deal with the dispute within the realm of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

As regards the current dispute between the United States and China, Ms Macapagal reiterated her earlier position that the government stood ready to contribute to the stability and balance of power in the region.

"The basic reality here is that their relationship will be a determining influence in the security situation as well as the economic evolution of East Asia," she said.

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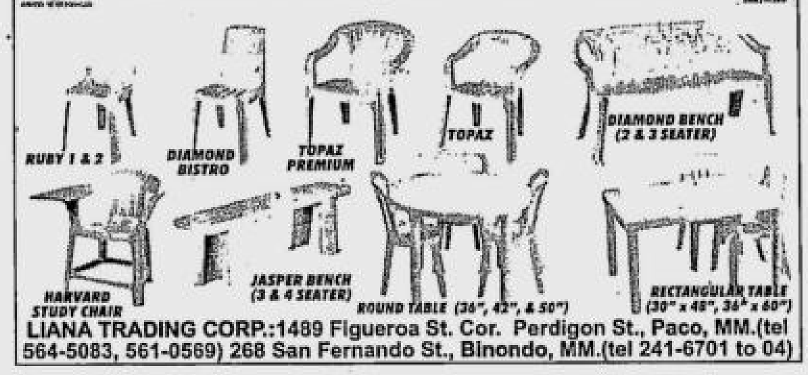
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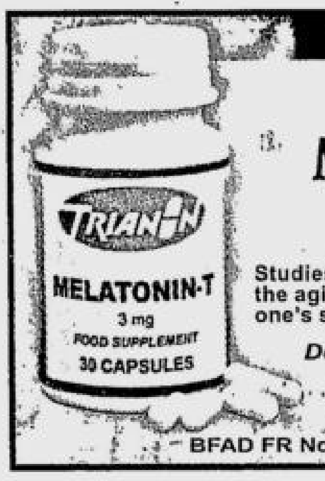

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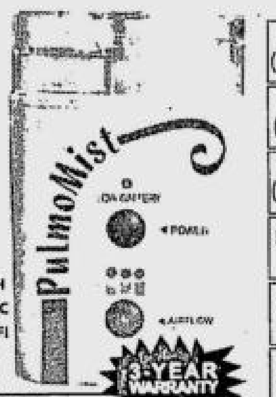

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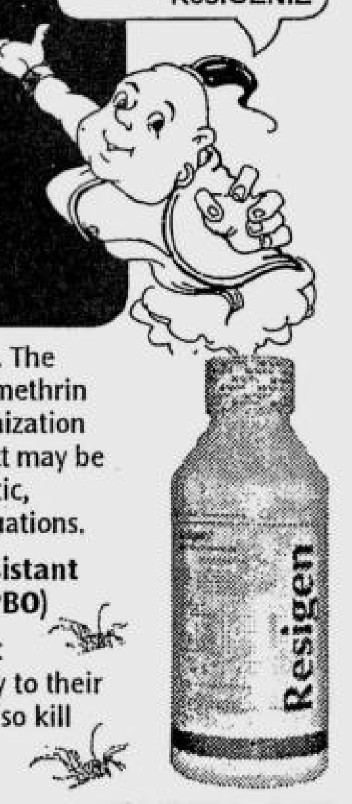
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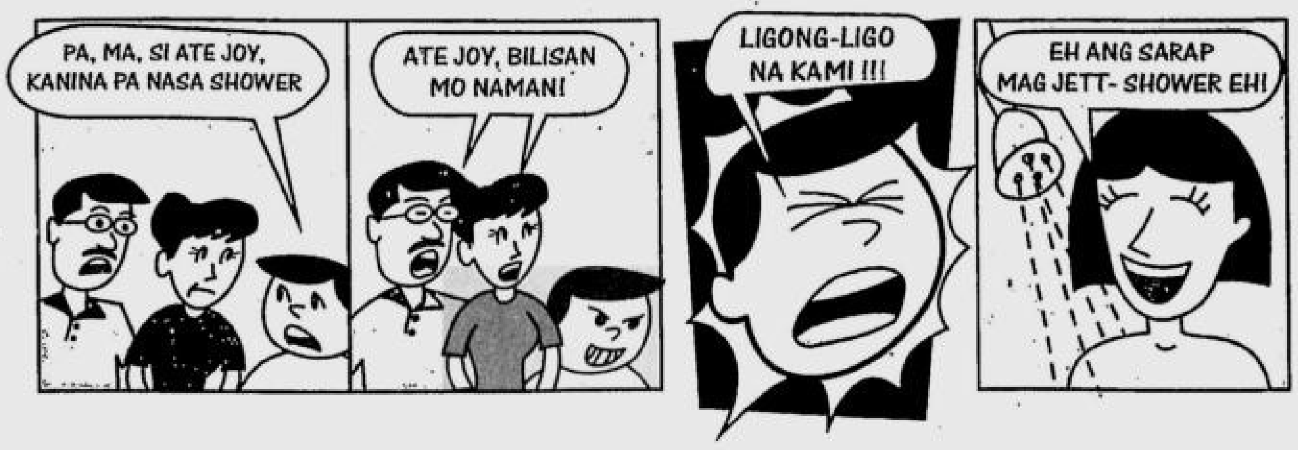
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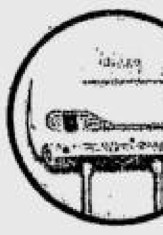

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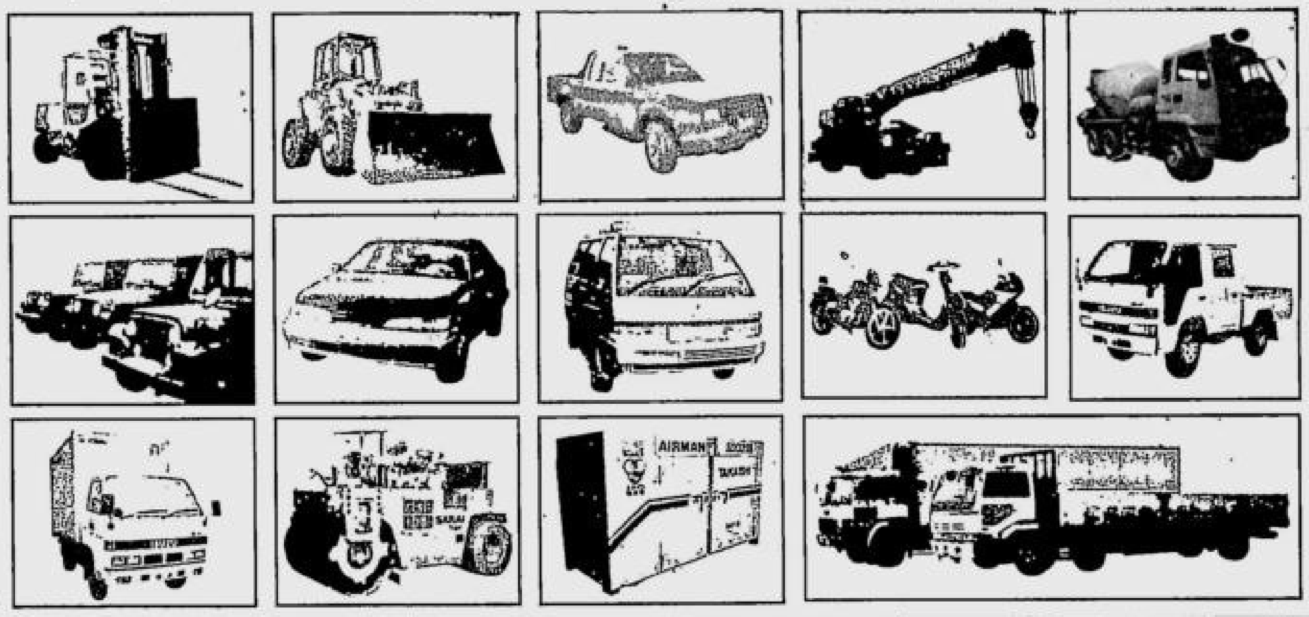

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EDITORIALS

Don't blow it

THE SENATORS aligned with the Macapagal administration are about to do something that millions of Erap supporters failed to do in the May 14 elections. They are about to hand over control of the Senate to the opposition. They will not do it on purpose, of course; every bloc in the nominally pro-administration grouping promises a surfeit of good intentions. But as surely as hubris leads to tragedy, the administration line will break under the pressure of personal ambition, and Sen. Edgardo Angara of the Puwersa ng Masa will once again become president of the Senate.

Let's think about that for a moment. A mere six months after Joseph Estrada was deposed, barely three months after his loyalists laid siege to Malacañang—and only 10 weeks after the People Power Coalition won the Senate race in May—the opposition will control the upper chamber. Not because of a clear political mandate, however, but simply by default.

Angara has proven to be a pragmatic political operator. He does not have the personal disposition to be a permanent member of any opposition; his preferred mode of interaction is mediation and conciliation. So even if he controls the legislative agenda of the Senate, his term will not necessarily be a disaster for the Macapagal administration.

But it is precisely Angara's moral flexibility—championing education reform, for example, but advocating Estrada's ignorant us-versus-them sense of loyalty; declaring the traditional independence of the Senate, but defending the brazen pro-Malacañang vote of the 11 senators last January—that will make his reelection to the third highest post in the land unacceptable to the different groups that powered Edsa II.

What will make the entire exercise even more galling to the members of that essentially moral movement that ousted Estrada is the key role that moral fence-sitters Ramon Revilla and son-in-law Robert Jaworski will play in the selection. The two senators have already said they will vote with the first group to muster 11 senators; in other words, they will side with any majority, as long as they get to enjoy the benefits that come with it. With an amazing lack of grace, the former action star and the former basketball great do not even have the decency—or is it the competence?—to mask their mercenary politics.

Just drop it

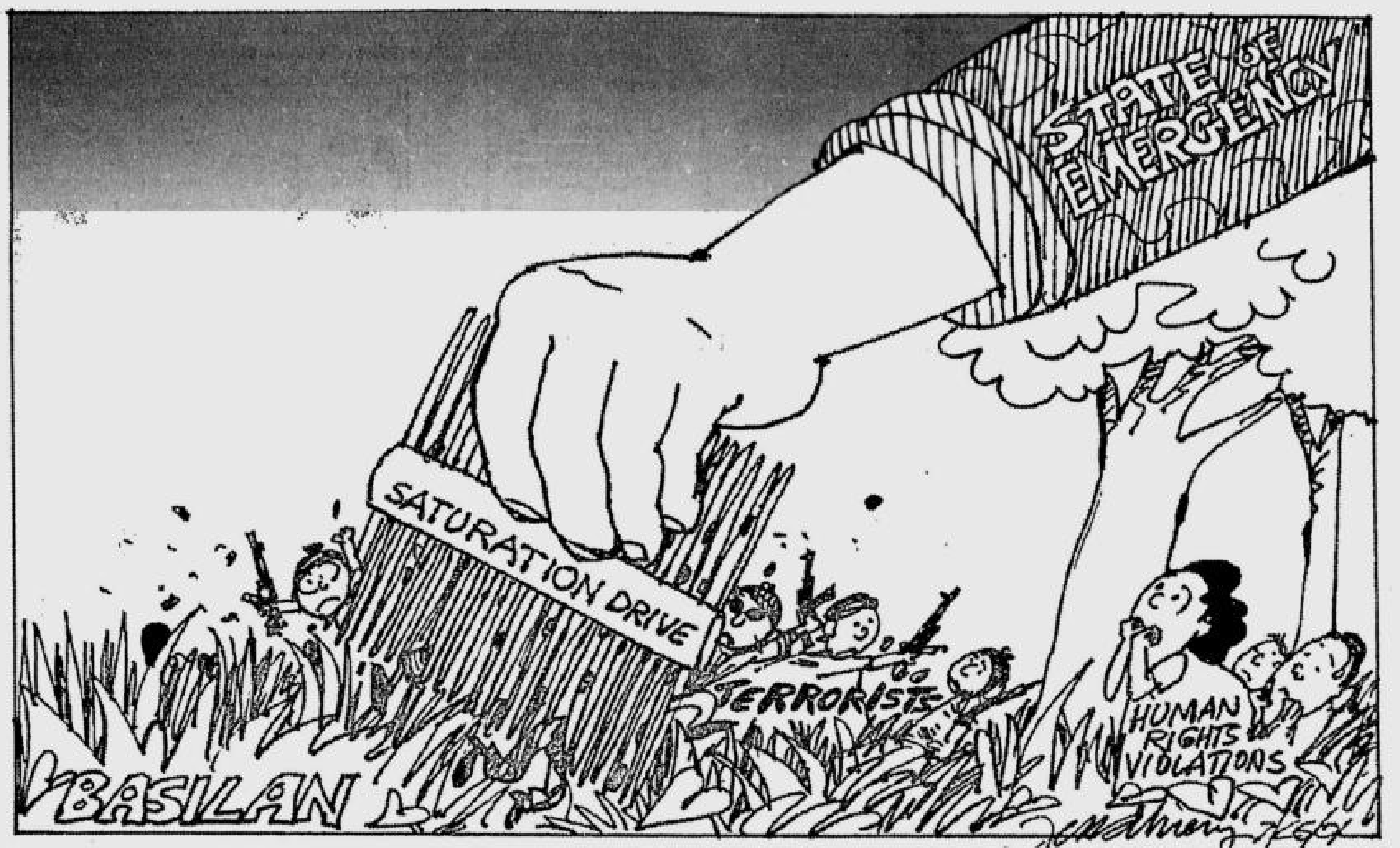
THERE are only two ways to prevent an Angara election. Either the pro-administration contenders all agree to withdraw in favor of a common candidate, or independents will broker a compromise with senators of both sides.

The second approach was responsible for installing the incumbent Senate president, Aquilino Pimentel Jr. (Three of those who voted for him to replace Sen. Franklin Drilon last November voted to open the second Jose Velarde envelope.) Today, the role of the independent broker may once again be played by Sergio Osmeña III, or perhaps by Rodolfo Biazon of Angara's LDP. It is also conceivable that the other Osmeña in the chamber, John, may also play this role, but the rivalry with his cousin will complicate matters.

For the administration, the first option remains best. But it is also the unlikeliest. This will require all the contenders attending today's scheduled meeting to drop their bids, period.

Improbable, but not impossible. There are face-saving reasons for doing so. Joker Arroyo can say he is temperamentally unsuited for what is essentially an administrative job; he doesn't even have a staff of his own. Renato Cayetano can say that, as a first-termer and a Lakas stalwart, he fully realizes that the present need is for a second-termer who can build bridges to the opposition. And Drilon can say he does not want personal ambition to come at the expense of the administration.

This much is clear. As long as these gentlemen come to the table with an inflated sense of their own destiny, the amoral arithmetic of fate will hand the Senate presidency to Angara, who represents Estrada. It is as simple as that.



New tragedy in the making in Montalban

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

PEOPLE never learn. The tragedy of Cherry Hills Subdivision in Antipolo where homes were buried by landslides and people killed may be repeated at neighboring Montalban (now renamed Rodriguez but many people still call by its old name) if the quarrying on a hill is not stopped. In fact, it may even be worse than that Cherry Hills landslide.

A quarry operator, the San Rafael Development Corp., is blasting and bulldozing the forested Mt. Parawagan in Rodriguez. It has an area of 106 hectares and is 475 meters high. The forest trees are being massacred and the topsoil scraped off to expose the "blue rock" deposits. Once exposed, the rocky formation will be blasted with dynamite. Pieces of rock will then be taken to the quarry plant to be ground into gravel-sized pellets to be sold as construction material.

The blasting and bulldozing have loosened the soil and when it rains hard, millions of tons of soil, mud, rocks and debris would slide down the hillside and bury the residential area of San Rafael, Rodriguez, below. From a height of 475 meters, one can just imagine the speed and power of the mudflow. It will be 10 times stronger than the Cherry Hills mudslide. Also below the towering tons of the potential mass killer are two landmarks of Rodriguez, the "Bahay ng May Kapansanan" (Home of the Disabled) and the "Formation House" of the Blessed Luigi Orione run by the Congregation of the Sons of Divine Providence, which were inaugurated by Ms Macapagal when she was still the vice president and secretary of social welfare department.

The blasting and bulldozing could not come at a worse time. It is the beginning of the rainy and typhoon season. Already two typhoons have passed through Luzon, flooding not only the low-lying areas of Metro Manila but, of all places, Baguio which is 5,000 feet above sea level. Hundreds of people were killed by landslides. Rodriguez folk were lucky that the typhoons blew through Northern Luzon. Had they swerved a little to the east, Central Luzon would have been hit and Rodriguez at the foot of Mt. Parawagan would now be buried under its dirt and thousands of people mourning the death of their loved ones. But more typhoons are coming and it takes only one of them to make Rodriguez a tragedy worse than Cherry Hills or Ormoc.

Residents of Rodriguez are now quaking in fear that the killer deluge may come any day or night soon.

How did this careless, callous, criminal, thoughtless and selfish act come about?

Ironically, the government, through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources under Secretary Antonio Cerilles, issued a quarry permit to the San Rafael Development Corp. The Montalban Environmental Protection Council has asked the government not only to revoke the permit but also to file graft charges against the officials who caused the permit to be issued, in violation of various laws and regulations. The council's chair, Dr. Pastor Cruz, and Msgr. Mariano Balbago of the archdiocese of Antipolo, wrote a petition to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and told her all the laws and regulations violated in the issuance of the quarry permit and the environment compliance certificate:

1. The sites of the quarrying and crushing plant of San Rafael Development Corp. are inside a National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuary created by Presidential Proclamations 1636 and 1637.

2. Letter of Instructions 833 prohibits the DENR from accepting mining permits, including quarrying and crushing plant permits, in areas reserved by Proclamations 1636 and 1637.

3. The mining operation violates Republic Act 7942, also known as the Mining Act of 1995 which provides in Section 19 that all areas proclaimed as National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries are closed to mining.

4. The quarrying permit of San Rafael was approved by the DENR in spite of the rejection by the Rodriguez municipal government of its location clearance.

5. The DENR approved the quarrying and crushing plant permits without any public hearing.

Other environmental laws violated by the DENR were:

- Sections 26 and 27 of the Local Government Code.
- Nipas Act of 1991/ PD 2146/ PD 1568.
- DENR Administrative Order 07-1989 which suspends the acceptance of applications and issuance of prospecting permits in government reservations, forest reserves, watersheds, national parks, wilderness mangrove and research experiment stations.

Doctor Cruz and Father Balbago also asked that the DENR officials who were involved in issuing the illegal permits and ECCs be charged and prosecuted by the Ombudsman for graft and corruption.

Secretary Heherson Alvarez, who is known to be protective of the environment, should lose no time in cancelling the permit, conducting an investigation and filing the charges with the Ombudsman. Quick action is needed. The rains are here and the lives of thousands of people are in peril.

* * *

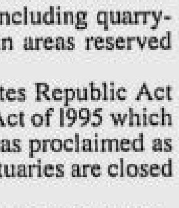
Manila Mayor Lito Atienza should not only be castigated for trying to erase the Mehan Gardens but should also be commended when he does right. And he should be commended for clearing the sidewalks of Recto of illegal sidewalk vendors. Most of the sidewalks in Metro Manila—excepting those of Marikina, which will be the subject of another column—have been lost not only to sidewalk vendors but also to parked vehicles. As a result, pedestrians, for whom the sidewalks were made, have to walk in the streets where they risk being sideswiped by passing vehicles. Last July 3, I wondered here why City Hall and the Philippine National Police were not doing anything about Recto which is a hotbed of crime and illegal activities, being the center of the production of all sorts of fake documents and licenses and the fence center for stolen and snatched valuables such as cell phones. Maybe the Atienza raid is a reaction to that for which he deserves praise.

For the sidewalk vendors who would lose their means of livelihood, perhaps a few narrow streets can be closed to vehicular traffic and the sidewalk vendors relocated there as is being done in Singapore. Some not-so-busy main streets like the Escolta can be closed to vehicular traffic on weekends and made into a shoppers' mall as is being done at the Ginza in Tokyo. And in Bangkok, there is the weekend market in a park as big as Rizal Park where vendors from all over Thailand congregate on Saturdays and Sundays to sell everything under the sun. That way, vendors banned from streets are not deprived of their livelihood. Before dawn of Monday, the park is cleared of vendors and clean again.

Maybe we can try that here.

Juan vs Juana

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

MY e-mail has been filled with letters commenting on the divorce bill, which President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo rejected following the position of the Catholic Church, and Jaime Cardinal Sin in particular, on the issue. The letters are pretty much evenly divided, one side citing the immorality of divorce, and the other side citing the immorality of not having divorce.

First off, I subscribe completely to the belief that President Macapagal's rejection of the bill owes far less to her conscience than to her debts of obligation to Cardinal Sin. I have yet to see her go against Cardinal Sin—or Cory Aquino—on any issue. Maybe she believes that divorce is evil, though I personally cannot see how she can. But that is beside the point. The alacrity with which she took up Cardinal Sin's position on "Live Show" must show who's the boss in matters of faith and morals, even where they bear on public policy, in this country. Quite incidentally, the Filipinos in the United States who saw the movie cannot for the life of them understand how so insightful and "deeply moral"—their words—a movie could possibly be X-ed by any government. Well, as Rizal knew very well, it can be done by a government controlled by the friars.

Now to the merits of the issue: critics of divorce cite several reasons against it. Among them: One, you allow divorce and people will take it at the slightest marital inconvenience, which should spell death to the Filipino family. The young will rush to marriage knowing there's always a way out. Two, it is against God's will. Marriage brings with it binding obligations that people who get married should take very, very seriously. Three, it breeds promiscuity. It makes it easy for people to leave their families and start new ones with the law's blessings.

The first is crazy. Divorce is a daunting prospect. It is an arduously trying process, on the heart as much as on the pocket, as any one who has gone through it will tell you. The alimony alone is enough to daunt, not to speak of lawyer's fees. It is not the court of first resort—enduring the hell of a cold marriage is easier—it is the court of last resort. Which is in fact my only qualm with the divorce bill. It cannot possibly benefit anyone other than the rich and upper middle class. It is beyond the reach of the poor and lower middle class.

The young will rush to marriage whether divorce is permissible or not—in this country more than elsewhere. The reason for that not being divorce but being the very religion that proscribes divorce. Cynical as it may sound, many couples, particularly in areas where the Church wields power of (after)life and (after)death on the faithful, marry for the simple reason that marriage offers the only officially sanctioned opportunity for sex for the husband (the unofficially sanctioned one, which takes on the aspect of coming-of-age ritual, is the whorehouse) and security for the wife. It is the same religion that bans contraceptives, thinking God to like children so much he wills to deliver a host of them into this world. That is what spells death to the Filipino family—its sheer magnitude—and often quite literally to the wife, from work and worry.

The second reason reminds me of that scene in "Quills" where Michael Caine's character, an upright, straight-as-a-rod doctor, who is going on in years, fetches a 16-year-old prearranged bride from a convent, and rapes her that same night. The nuns may not have taught her about her God-decreed obligations to her husband, he says between violent thrusts after tearing off her clothes, and as she cries silently, but he will. We may no longer have prearranged marriages—though that may be arguable, in light of the experiences of the urban and (especially) rural poor, and indeed in light of mothers pimping for their daughters, who are often not the poor—but we do have that scene above playing again and again before us in this country. It is nothing more or less than officially sanctioned rape, this business of wives having obligations to their husbands.

Where I stand, or lie down, the only sacred thing in marriage is that man and wife love each other. That is gone, and there is nothing sacred in it. There's just a piece of paper signed by a minor clerk in city hall or a priest who was in a hurry to perform to the next sacrament to improve his income. I know some couples who have lived together for years, who never got a license from city hall or from their parish, who have seen the best of times and the worst of times, who love each other deeply. I cannot see them living in sin, I can only see them living in bliss. God's ways must be truly mysterious for him to consign them to hell and bring to heaven the sadists and masochists who insist on inflicting pain on themselves and others just to keep his law.

The last reason is just plain hypocritical. At the very least, we may not have divorce, but we have separation, which the rich—truly their privileges know no bounds—are able to make use of. Some of them even get the Vatican itself to issue a dispensation. What is the difference between divorce and separation? Only that in the first, you bribe your ex-spouse with alimony while in the second you bribe Church and State with donations.

We may not have divorce, but we have something worse, which is the phenomenon of mistresses. Which is not confined to the rich and middle class too but cuts across society. It is the favorite pastime of cops in particular, who have several families—they find it their duty to God and man, man also going by the name of machismo, to get their women pregnant as often as possible—and who demand their God-given rights from their wives when they come home drunk and in a dark mood at night. The rich may have more finesse, but they are not loath to apply "*cariño brutal*" as the need arises. I do not know that this isn't rending asunder what God has put together in more violent way. But which sin is easily expiated by a few Our Fathers, Hail Marys and Glory Bes, after confession.

Rejecting the divorce bill can only reinforce our culture of double standards, a culture spawned and reinforced by religious fanaticism, which likes erecting strict laws in theory but finding loopholes in them in practice. It can only reinforce our culture of divorcing form and substance, of observing religious ritual and canon religiously, such as by going to Church on Sundays, going to confessions and receiving the sacraments regularly, while living such unchristian lives all the while. At least divorce calls a spade a spade.

Why we insist on calling a spade a hoe, I'll never know. Some call it Jesuitic. Others call it Filipino.

Results and legal procedures in Sayyaf crackdown

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE GOVERNMENT'S crackdown on Abu Sayyaf members, supporters and sympathizers in Mindanao is bound to be controversial with the human rights groups, especially on the issue of the "warrantless" arrests. There is a bit of confusion in this regard, for some media outlets have reported that the arrests have been made without warrants, while government officials, led by President Macapagal herself, insist that warrants have been served. I ran into Press Secretary Noel Cabrera at the French Embassy reception for Bastille Day last Saturday night, and he stressed that the arrests were covered with warrants.

* * *

There are several things to stress. One is that the public is fed up with the lawlessness of the Abu Sayyaf bandits and the military's failure to root them out. This recent crackdown wave, therefore, will sit well with the public so long as results are produced and legal procedures are followed. Warrantless or with warrants, the arrests will not provoke a big outcry so long as Abu Sayyaf leaders and firearms are captured; so far the crackdown has led to the arrest of 39 suspects, led by the right-hand man of founder Khadaffy Janjalani, who was captured in Zamboanga City the other day. To help quell the protests, government has to make the effort to uphold legal steps, such as filing cases against those arrested within 36 hours, or releasing them. It would also help to ensure that barangay leaders are always involved in the arrests, to serve as witness that no abuses are committed.

* * *

Speculation that the People Power Coalition in the Senate appears to be headed for the rocks was just affirmed the other day by Senate President Aquilino Pimentel when he warned that the Senate could become a rubber stamp of the Macapagal administration if a senator from the PPC is elected Senate president. I find this remark quite curious and I hope the Senate chief was misquoted. At the very least, he appears *malabo*, just like in the earlier weeks of the impeachment trial.

The Senate chief is counted among the 12 PPC senators and from what I gather, he was among the aspirants who had earlier agreed to confine themselves to solving the leadership issue within the PPC. They were all supposed to agree that whoever of the 12 gets the majority of seven votes, the rest of the aspirants will support him. But now, Pimentel is saying openly that electing a PPC senator would be bad for the chamber as it would become a rubber stamp of Ms Macapagal. After lambasting the PPC thus, he then turns around and says he is willing to enter into a power-sharing agreement with either the PPC or the opposition party. Is Pimentel attacking the PPC because he knows he is not its choice for Senate chief? If he were anointed by President Macapagal, would he attack the PPC?

* * *

Star columnist Carmen Pedrosa wrote in a recent column about the way members of the UP fraternity Sigma Rho "have spread their wings over our justice system." Pedrosa wrote about how frat members "are capturing judicial posts to the point that Sigma Rhoan lawyers prefer salas under Sigma Rhoan judges." She pointed out that in the absence of ideology and party platforms, fraternities "become substitutes that draw individuals together to form power blocs." Continued Pedrosa: "Not unlike the Mafia, the (frat men) consolidate their power by taking over strategic positions in government and pose a threat as a 'government within the government.' "

* * *

Many readers doubtless were fascinated by Pedrosa's observation but I must admit that I also have heard of the Sigma Rho's incredible "spread" in government. After reading her piece, I began jotting down names of prominent frat men and realized that right in the Senate three of the senators vying for the top post are Sigma Rhoans: Franklin Drilon, Edgardo Angara and Renato Cayetano. Hence it is a friendly competition. In the previous Senate there was also a prominent frat man in former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile. Other Sigma Rhoans include Public Works Secretary Simeon Datumanong, but it's in the judicial circles where they abound, among them Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo and presidential legal adviser Avelino "Nonong" Cruz. I am trying to get the list of all frat men appointed as RTC judges, which I understand is quite impressive. It is said that the frat is projecting to get Court of Appeals Justice Presbiterio Velasco appointed to the court's helm at the proper time, as he is still quite junior in ranking. People also note that the most prominent law office now is that of Carpio Villaraza, headed by two frat men; senior partner Tony Carpio, former legal adviser to President Ramos, is now in the Petron board, but his influence is said to reach out way beyond that post.

* * *

Knowledgeable sources note that the Integrated Bar of the Philippines has been the Sigma Rho's exclusive domain since Angara became its head in the Marcos era. A Sigma Rhoan has always headed it since then up to now, under current president Art Lim, except briefly for the stint of Eugene Tan, an Atenean, who subsequently found his position untenable. Significantly, two vital IBP offices, the national directorship for legal aid and the commission on bar discipline, are held by top notcher lawyer Macel Fernandez, Angara's chief of staff, and Sigma Rhoan Vic Fernandez, respectively. People I've interviewed opine that this ambitious frat has set its eyes on the presidency in 2004, with Drilon as its candidate. One holdout in the judicial circles is Justice Secretary Nani Perez, an Atenean, but could it be that recent attempts to link him with so-called juicy commissions could be part of the frat's attempt to edge him out? Just asking.

* * *

Many people are very happy over reports that Manila Mayor Lito Atienza is willing to consider locating his City College of Manila at the old Ateneo de Manila in Intramuros, instead of continuing its construction at the historic Mehan Gardens. Atienza was quoted as saying he had no objections to the transfer but that this had to be decided by the national government which owns the Intramuros property. May we then appeal to the national government to allow the city government to use the old Ateneo, where national hero Jose Rizal studied nearly 150 years ago? We can be sure that nothing would please the national hero more than to have his old alma mater, destroyed by American bombs during the last war, come alive again as a city college for Manilans. Perhaps the Mehan Gardens can then be made to recover its old glory as a botanical garden, through a combined effort of the city government and the private sector. If Atienza, an Ateneo alumnus, would ask the private sector to help out in the Mehan Gardens, I am certain many would respond. In fact, he could challenge the noisy critics of his Mehan Gardens project to now work hand-in-hand with him restore the garden to its former stature and as a people's park. The thought of that lovely old tree featured on the INQUIRER's front page yesterday being cut down to make way for a building breaks one's heart.

Power from the poor

COMMENTARY

Andrea Soco
Institute on Church and Social Issues

TWELVE months ago, the country was shocked when a mountain of garbage collapsed and buried hundreds of informal settlers living at its foot. The event happened in Payatas, an area better known as a symbol of the nation's poverty. Today, people are still getting killed by minor landslides. Men, women and children continue to endure the stench of the garbage and scavenge for a living. The dump still looms over the area, reminding residents of the tragedy a year ago, and of their poverty.

But Payatas has another face—one that is filled with hope, as its residents carry on a slum upgrading project, a project that will be financed mainly by the residents' savings. While this month marks the anniversary of the trash slide, it also signals the possibilities of a partnership between the poor and the private sector. Earlier this week, the Asian Development Bank granted the Payatas community $1.32 million as assistance for the project. Even without the grant, however, residents will still push through with slum upgrading. They, after all, have savings.

Long before the tragedy, Payatas residents were already implementing a savings and loan program initiated by the Vincentian Missionaries Social Development Foundation Inc. This program enabled those with very little income, such as scavengers, to save and borrow for various purposes. Wilma, a member, maintained that she was able to send her children to school and buy a sewing machine through her savings.

Many other savings programs have been operating in Payatas since the 1990s. One of these is the savings for land and housing, which is specifically for land acquisition and housing purposes. Through such program, residents have been able to address the seemingly insurmountable urban poor problem of landlessness and the lack of tenure security.

Poor communities across the country have replicated the Payatas savings model in their areas. Many of these communities, the Kabalaka Homeowners' Association in Iloilo for instance, which is composed of very poor informal settlers, have already ventured into land acquisition. These cases show that the poor have resources that they can mobilize given the right push. As Maitet Diokno, president of the Freedom from Debt Coalition, mentioned in a forum on the Post-Estrada Reform Agenda, "there is big money in little people."

The government, however, and indeed many of us, see the poor as problems and not as partners in development. Hence, despite all the poverty alleviation strategies thrown about, the majority of the population are still mired in poverty. If the goal is to reduce poverty, we must recognize the poor's capacity to mobilize resources and see the poor as human resources. Unless this happens, policies to fight poverty will merely be rhetorical because these will not be about the poor but about figures—poverty incidence, unemployment rate, etc.—and about making a good impression on the public.

The same goes for poverty alleviation and reduction programs. Recently, the government and various sectors of society have been holding dialogues and workshops on poverty reduction but no new approach has been suggested. If the government will simply keep on doing what it has been doing or what past administrations have done, then it is likely that very little will be achieved.

The poor hold the solutions to their problems and they have resources, no matter how few these are. They just need to be motivated. A social development worker told me of a study her organization did in an area in Pampanga. The researchers wanted to know why many residents placed bets in *jueteng* despite their poverty and found that the respondents risked their money because it was too little for anything else. Had there been a savings program in the area, she said, it would have allowed these respondents to save and use their money more productively. Savings programs, however, are not the only means to mobilize the resources of the poor. In whatever way this is done, the key is to recognize the capacities of the poor and listen to what they have to say.

Miraculously modified organisms

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

SATURDAY'S INQUIRER carried a letter to the editor taking me to task for a recent commentary, "Greenpeace has a black eye." It's not often that I get accused of being a lapdog in a cabal of apologists for some evil imperialist empire, and by a major international NGO like Greenpeace at that. With its $100-million annual budget and thousands of "campaigners" and professional activists in 26 offices worldwide, this is not your typical Third World NGO or '60s hippie outfit! (By the way, "lapdog" seems to have replaced "running dog" in the radical argot of the '90s.)

But their real quarrel should be with Dr. Patrick Moore. He was an original founding father of Greenpeace and their top dog in Canada until the mid-'80s, who has disavowed the current leadership for taking the organization far away from its original mission and centrist political base. Just this past March, he was again a thorn in the side of former comrades. He signed a statement with over 3000 world-renowned scientists, including five Nobel Prize winners, in support of agricultural biotechnology, against which Greenpeace has ardently been campaigning.

I wrote the article after reading several interviews he gave to media in Australia and Bangkok. Moore has a special insight into what has happened to the environmental movement that began in the Greenpeace he co-founded 30 years ago and helped to build for 15 years. In a published interview with New Scientist magazine, he sums up his observations as follows:

"The environmental movement abandoned science and logic somewhere in the mid-1980s, just as mainstream society was adopting all the more reasonable items on the environmental agenda. This was because many environmentalists couldn't make the transition from confrontation to consensus, and could not get out of adversarial politics. This particularly applies to political activists who were using environmental rhetoric to cover up agendas that had more to do with class warfare and anti-corporatism than they did with the actual science of the environment. To stay in an adversarial role, those people had to adopt ever more extreme positions because all the reasonable ones were being accepted."

I think this applies with terrible accuracy to many of the so-called Philippine Greens, who got into the environmental movement after long years of anti-imperialist struggle as Philippine Reds in the national democratic movement. It is perhaps no coincidence that fully two-thirds of Greenpeace's huge annual budget is raised from leftist Euro-yuppie supporters in Germany and Holland, where Utrecht serves as its headquarters. (Now where do we know that town from?)

Moore asserts that the environmental movement has been coopted by international ideologues for purposes having little to do with ecology and more to do with fund-raising and radical politics. This could explain why the antagonists in the debate over the safety of genetically modified organisms in the Philippines, always seem to be talking past one another. It is because they aren't trying to achieve the same thing. Though environmentalists harp on the issue of GMO safety, they are only using it as a tactic in a war of obstruction against the big multinational companies that dominate the field. Many scientists I know are often frustrated when dealing directly with the activists in discussions and forums because they don't realize that for such as Greenpeace, GMO safety is a propaganda tool, not a scientific issue.

No one has been more concerned about the safety of GMOs for human consumption than the scientific community. It is genetic engineers and medical researchers, not campaigners and lawyer-lobbyists, who are actually doing anything about the need for answers. But the activists say the absolute safety of GMOs is unproven, and worse, not provable. Despite thousands of precedents elsewhere, they oppose the very tests to demonstrate substantial safety because they claim the technology is so risky, and the unknowns so great, that we can never know for sure if they are safe enough. This kind of reasoning, Dr. Moore has called "junk science,"—the basis of Greenpeace's call for a worldwide moratorium on research, development and dissemination of genetic biotechnology.

Well, it may be bad science, but it's great politics. Media can be relied upon, it seems, to amplify every sensational pseudo-scientific warning from the environmental Cassandras. They even seem to have real clout with top administration officials in key departments like agriculture and environment, with strong pressure to put biotech projects on the backburner. This will surely hurt many developing areas of biotech that have nothing to do with genetics, in which the Philippines stands at least as great a chance of excelling as computers and call centers.

So the Philippines may once again be set up to miss the next great wave of technological innovation in the production of food, medicine, and other biological products, just like it missed the whole microelectronics revolution. The whole issue will probably receive one carefully calibrated zero-sum sentence in the President's State of the Nation address next week.

Finally, I am aghast at the letter-writer's cheap exploitation of both Pope John Paul II and Jaime Cardinal Sin. I'm sure that the Pope has not declared the use of genetically modified organisms to be against God's will, as the writer brazenly asserts, blithely oblivious to how ridiculous that actually sounds in this day and age. I'm sure these churchmen are being taken out of context to express Greenpeace's will instead. Besides, if one accepts the doctrine of transubstantiation as all devout Catholics must, there is the tantalizing possibility that the Great Artificer is also the ultimate Genetic Engineer. How else explain the miraculously modified organisms of a bit of wheat and grape turned into flesh and blood and His bidding that we do the same? How can such divine technology be against His will?

Text messages as source of news

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

THE "SHORT message system," more popularly known as texting, was meant to be an add-on, not the principal feature, of cellular telephones. But as things turned out, it has become the main reason for buying that not exactly inexpensive communication instrument.

Aside from enabling people to quickly get in touch with each other, texting appears to have evolved into another means by which reporters can get information from news sources if personal interviews or telephone calls are not possible.

This development surfaced in the July 9, 2001 issue of the INQUIRER that carried the news about the result of the drug test conducted on an alleged former agent of the disbanded Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, Angelo Manaway alias Ador, who implicated Sen. Panfilo Lacson in kidnapping, murder and smuggling activities.

A portion of the news reads: "If there is proof of *corpus delicti* and (Ador's) testimony is enough to establish a prima facie case, then he could be placed under (the) Witness Protection Program," Perez said in a text message in response to a query by the INQUIRER."

The Perez referred to in the news report and was cited by the reporter as having sent the text message quoted is Justice Secretary Hernando Perez.

This is not really the first time that the contents of text messages formed part of news reports. During last year's impeachment trial of President Estrada, the messages sent by pro- and anti-Erap people were featured in the newspaper's front page. The messages were either insulting, hilarious or outrageous, depending on your political persuasion.

A similar treatment was given to some of the messages that flew wild and thick during the Edsa II and Edsa III events. The news reports validated the claim by local cell phone operators that the Philippines has the highest density of text messaging in the world.

News source

The question of whether text messages should be given "news value" or considered authentic for purposes of news reporting was discussed during last week's editorial assessment meeting by the INQUIRER editors.

Some of the editors didn't know that a text message of the justice secretary was quoted directly in the news until they were informed about it. Text messaging has crossed over from the Lifestyle section to the front page.

There were some misgivings, however, about the wisdom of using text messages as a source of news. The concerns raised were primarily with regard to their accuracy and authenticity.

How can we be sure that the message really came from the public official from whose cell phone it apparently came? What if his cell phone had been stolen and the person who stole it sent the wrong information to the reporter to embarrass the INQUIRER?

According to the reporter who contributed that news portion, Perez seldom answers cell phone calls by reporters. His phone has "voice mail" capability that enables callers to leave their messages to which he responds either by calling back or sending a text message.

In the case of the news about the result of Manaway's drug test, the question about his admission into the Witness Protection Program was sent to Perez through the latter's cell phone voice mail. Perez promptly sent his reply to the reporter in the manner it was quoted in the news.

As the reporter had dealt with Perez a number of times before and there was no reason to doubt the genuineness of the answer sent by text messaging, his reply to the question was included in the news report.

By way of precaution though, the reporter "saved" Perez's message for future reference. In case anybody questions the authenticity of the quote or source of the news, the saved message can be referred to immediately for validation.

Care and caution

I have no reason to doubt the validity of the reporter's act in resorting to text messaging to get Perez's side of the story. Under pressure to submit meaty or substantive (not just for the heck of it) news reports not later than 4 p.m., reporters have to be resourceful in obtaining information from their sources.

The stories I've heard in the editorial room about the unorthodox means that reporters use to go after facts and figures for their reports range from hilarious to daring to foolhardy. It is amazing how the threat of nagging by the editors or fear of being scooped by others can make reporters imaginative in carrying out their reportorial chores.

But the use of text messaging in the information gathering process for news purposes poses certain problems that may adversely affect the credibility of the newspaper.

Cell phones, like communications done through the Internet, can be hacked or tampered with to make it appear that a text message came from a particular phone when the truth is otherwise. With text messaging no longer limited to cell phones, since landline telephones already have the same capability, the opportunity for sending "fake" messages has expanded.

It's easy for a disgruntled or envious co-worker of a public official to use the latter's cell phone to send misleading or false messages to a reporter to put the official in a bad light.

Or somebody who had been rubbed the wrong way by a reporter may send bum information (*kuryente*, as news people call it) by text message and the reporter falls for the gambit, with disastrous results to his or her credibility and reputation, including that of the newspaper.

If text messages cannot be avoided as a source of news, the reporter is obliged to exert extra effort to check and double-check their authenticity. Either by getting in touch personally with the party who sent the message or looking for another source who can independently confirm or disprove the information that is the subject of the text message.

In other words, extra care and caution must be exercised by the reporter in using text messages as a source of news.

Incidentally, the text message of Perez to the INQUIRER reporter used clear and complete sentences. **COZ HIS OLD HE DAS NOT NO D RITE WAY 2 TOK D GEN X WAY**. Go figure!

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

THEY SAID

Unequal partnership

"We received a list of suggested committees for LP (Liberal Party) members from our colleagues in the PPC (People Power Coalition) and it was a joke. We're being relegated to total unimportance."

—Tarlac Rep. Benigno Aquino III, rejecting Rep. Jose de Venecia's bid to keep the Liberal Party in the administration coalition

Killing for a living

"The majority of Badoc (in Ilocos Norte) residents are Virginia tobacco, garlic, corn and rice farmers but some of our menfolk are, unfortunately, engaged in a not-so-ordinary occupation. They kill people for a living."

—Ilocos Norte board member and former mayor Jimmy Rana

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Be grateful for family

TEENAGERS often find it corny to be close to their parents. They would usually go out with them, only if they need something. It is a sad notion, but true. I also thought that this notion was okay, until I heard the story of two girls while I was in a coffee shop. It started when Girl A began narrating that her father would often take her to the mall, the movies and even the museums. But all of these changed, she said, when her father began to work for some big-shot company. So obviously, the father's time was consumed by his work. And since her father was being paid a large amount of money, a lot of things changed. At first, they were all psyched about it. But after a while, they began to part from one another. Her mother was also busy with her business, her sister studied in Manila, while she was in Katipunan and her dad was only in the country twice a month. At this point, I expected that Girl A would now be in tears, but to my surprise, they both laughed at it. As if it was all a joke to them.

Then Girl B began to relate her story, it was basically about her dad being addicted to drugs. She started with her dad being a good person or the "perfect father" as she would put it. He would take his daughters to school and come home in the evening to help them with their assignments. But suddenly things began to change when her father suddenly got addicted to a certain type of drug. They were still young then, so she really couldn't remember what the full story was. But the bottom line was that their family began to shatter. Hence, she now lives in an apartment in Katipunan. Then she finished the conversation by asking her friend to go back to their apartment now to smoke some weed.

After hearing both the stories, I began to have this epiphany that I was really lucky that I still had a family to guide me until I was responsible enough.

And with this, allow me to say that if you find it corny or "*baduy*" for your mom or dad to be at your side when you walk in the mall, be thankful that they are still there.—**NEIL P. NANQUIL, Mission Society Miriam College Foundation Inc., Loyola Heights, Quezon City**

Election of Shahani as head of NCCA committee OK

WE would like to take strong exception to the column of Neal H. Cruz on July 10, 2001 regarding the *"alleged"* intervention of Malacañang in the selection of the chair of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. Jaime Laya and the late Leandro Locsin were not anywhere in the NCCA organization when they were processed for the chairmanship of the NCCA. The election of Dr. Leticia Ramos-Shahani as head of the Committee of Libraries and Information Services is valid and legal. By the way, the NCCA is an agency under the Office of the President.—**TERESA S. MONTESA, head, National Commission for Culture and the Arts-National Committee on Archives; ANTONIO C. HILA, head, National Commission for Culture and the Arts-National Committee on Historical Research; MA. DIVINA PASCUA-CRUZ, secretary, National Commission for Culture and the Arts-Committee on Libraries and Information Services**

Abrogate the VFA

WE would like to comment on the news of the rape of a Japanese woman by an American soldier two weeks ago at Okinawa where US soldiers are stationed at the Kadena Air Base as part of the Status of Forces Agreement pact with Japan.

We are in solidarity with the Japanese rape victim and the Japanese people in calling for the immediate prosecution of American serviceman Timothy Woodland and the banning of American troops from Asian soil.

We believe that if American soldiers can rape Japanese women, they can also rape Filipinas.

The Toledo bomb incident in Cebu last year where two children died should have been proof enough of the dangers that any pact with the United States can bring. US soldiers left unused munitions at a training site in Toledo where two boys were killed.

The United States would still not take any responsibility for the incident since they are protected by provisions of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). Under the VFA, only US troops can enjoy protection while justice is denied the victims.

We pin no hope on President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in the pursuance of cases of deaths and rights abuse during VFA war exercises since she is beholden to the United States and the Philippine military for her ascension to power.

We believe that Ms Macapagal would rather sacrifice the people's dignity and welfare than prosecute any American soldier for fear that she may get frowned upon by her US associates.

The Pagkakaisan ng Kababaihan para sa Inang Bayan (Kaisa Ka) calls for the removal of 353 American soldiers of the US Special Operations Squadron participating in the latest VFA war exercises in the Philippines and the immediate abrogation of the VFA.—**SONIA SOTO, chair, Pagkakaisan ng Kababaihan para sa Inang Bayan (Kaisa Ka), 59 Imperial St., Cubao, Quezon City**

Equal pay for equal work

RECENTLY the headlines carried news that gave the country's 1.4 million demoralized government employees some reason to be happy: cuts were ordered on the salaries of executives from government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs) and government financial institutions (GFIs) and the salaries of civil servants were increased by 5 percent. What these issues highlight is the gaping disparity in salaries and other privileges enjoyed within the bureaucracy, which inevitably contributes to the deteriorating state of public services.

At one end, executives in the Government Service Insurance System, Social Security System, Development Bank of the Philippines, Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp., Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, etc., are earning millions a year. They may adopt corporate practices in their operations, but this is not justification for their wallowing in the Filipino people's hard-earned money. If their skills and academic credentials are what make them "gifted" (thus, deserving such high salaries) compared to other government employees, then how come a number of these GOCCs and GFIs have gained notoriety for making bad investments? Why not cover them under the Salary Standardization Law like the rest of the civil service? In this way, the government can recruit competent people with a genuine sense of public service, rather than opportunists itching to get their hands on public funds.

On the other hand, most government employees can hardly make both ends meet because of their meager salaries. And yet salaries, benefits and other politically sensitive issues can only be resolved through legislation, but the depressing fact is that very few legislators see how a government employee who enjoys adequate terms and conditions of work becomes more motivated in delivering quality public service.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's recent move to increase the salaries of government employees is but a palliative. A better solution would be to allow unions within the public sector to negotiate with government regarding salaries and a host of other sensitive issues. If there is an Employers Confederation of the Philippines, why can't there be an institutionalized counterpart in the public sector?

You want to check "atrocious" pay? Let there be job standardization. You want quality public services? Let there be proper remuneration for jobs through negotiations between the government and unions. You want quality public services? Let there be equal pay for equal work and work of equal value.—**ANNIE ENRIQUEZ-GERON, general secretary, Public Services Labor Independent Confederation, 15 Clarion Lily St., Saint Dominic Subd. I, Congressional Avenue, Project 6, Quezon City**

Expensive government consultants unnecessary

THE EXECUTIVE order issued by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to slash the salaries and allowances of top executives of government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs) and government financing institutions (GFIs) is laudable. The executives' consent to the proposed pay cut for the benefit of a nation that is reeling in economic difficulties made the move doubly laudable.

If the President is really bent on imposing an honest-to-goodness culture of austerity, she can go further by exploring other areas in which savings can be made. She can begin by looking at the atrocious salaries being paid to consultants and advisers to these GOCCs and GFIs, which are sometimes bigger than what the executives get. Moreover, it is a fact that most of the consultants and advisers are hired only as an "accommodation" to relatives or powerful politicians.

She should not stop there. She can also order a review of the necessity of hiring consultants for foreign-assisted projects who are paid in precious dollars. Most foreign consultants are unnecessary, except those who are engaged in highly technical infrastructure projects. She will be shocked to find that such consultants are normally paid 10 times more than their counterpart Filipino project managers although their jobs are limited to monitoring and writing a monthly progress report.

The savings to be derived from these unnecessary expenses will go a long way in financing the pro-poor programs of the government.—**GRACIANO N. LABAYOG, 403 Kayumanggi St., Plainview, Mandaluyong City**

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The WORLD

LUVERNE B. GUECO, EDITOR

Summit off to positive start

AGRA, India—A landmark summit between the leaders of India and Pakistan got off to a positive start Sunday as they met for longer than expected for one-on-one talks aimed at trying to overcome 50 years of hostility.

"The session lasted one-and-a-half hours, which was a very, very good sign," Pakistan government spokesman Anwar Mahmood said.

Mahmood said Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee would take a 10-minute break before meeting again over lunch with their respective delegations.

Asked if the one-on-one talks would continue in the afternoon, Mahmood replied: "They are heads of government. They can do whatever they see fit."

The two leaders had originally been expected to meet in private for less than one hour before calling in their ministers.

The positive beginning appeared to support cautious optimism among senior officials on both sides, despite pre-summit bickering over the priority accorded to the crucial issue of the Himalayan region of Kashmir.

The summit between the two nuclear-capable South Asian powers is the first for more than two years and is being watched closely by a concerned international community as well as their regional neighbors.

The timetable had been left deliberately open-ended to allow the two sides to set their own pace.

Indian Information Minister Sushma Swaraj said she was optimistic that something "positive and tangible" would emerge and argued concern over the agenda was misplaced.

"This summit is not time bound, nothing is structured and that is its beauty," Swaraj said.

"Everything is open and flexible. The two leaders can carry on one-on-one or call in their respective ministers on any issue they feel like."

The issues under discussion are as complex as the stakes are high.

India and Pakistan have fought three full-scale wars since the partition of the sub-continent in 1947—two of them over Kashmir, which is divided between the two countries and claimed by both.

An armed Muslim separatist insurgency in Indian-controlled Kashmir—which New Delhi alleges is sponsored by Pakistan in the form of a "proxy war"—has claimed more than 35,000 lives since its launch in 1989, according to official Indian figures.

Pakistan, which puts the death toll at 70,000, denies the charges of "cross-border terrorism" but extends open moral and diplomatic support to what it describes as the Kashmiris' rights to self-determination.

Pakistan had insisted the decades-old territorial dispute over Kashmir should be the "core issue" of the summit determining discussion of all other matters of bilateral concern.

India was equally adamant that Kashmir be considered a composite part of a broad-based dialogue covering equally important matters such as cross-border terrorism, economic cooperation and the development of nuclear safeguards. *AFP*

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Peru seeks Fujimori extradition

LIMA—Peru took another step on Saturday toward seeking the extradition of former President Alberto Fujimori from Japan, with a public prosecutor asking the Supreme Court to declare him an "absent criminal" and order his arrest.

Fujimori fled to Japan last November at the height of a corruption scandal sparked by his spy chief and was fired by Congress as "morally unfit" to rule. He remains in Japán, protected there from moves to try him by his dual citizenship.

Prosecutor Nicanor de la Fuente called on the Supreme Court to "declare him (Fujimori) an absent criminal... requesting also his capture and extradition" on charges of dereliction of duty, the state prosecutor's office said in a statement.

Tokyo has recognized the 62-year-old Fujimori as Japanese because his parents, who emigrated to Peru in the 1930s, entered his name in a family register in their hometown.

Japan does not as a rule extradite its nationals and has so far resisted Peru's efforts to call him to account for fleeing last year amid the country's worst political and graft crisis.

Fujimori set off for Asia on a trade trip but then made a surprise trip to Japan, where he sent his resignation to Congress. It was rejected and he was fired instead.

He has been in Japan ever since and is writing his memoirs.

He insists he is innocent of all wrongdoing and has no plans to return to Peru, saying he would not get a fair hearing.

A spokesperson for the attorney general's office said Saturday's move was a "step toward" extradition of Fujimori.

There was no indication of when the Supreme Court would respond, but the spokesman said it could happen quickly.

Peru is cranking up efforts to haul Fujimori home to face justice after the capture in Venezuela last month of his spy chief, Vladimiro Montesinos.

Peru's ambassador to Tokyo, Luis Machiavello, who was recently called to Lima for consultations on how to proceed in the Fujimori case, told Reuters this week that Peru would charge the former president with more serious crimes and then formally seek extradition.

The only case open against him so far is for dereliction of duty, but Peru's attorney general has also charged him with responsibility in a "horrendous" 1991 massacre by an army death squad. This charge has yet to be approved by Congress.

Montesinos, who is being held in a high-security jail at a Lima naval base, has been telling judges he acted on Fujimori's orders when he allegedly tapped phones and manipulated Peru's courts, Congress, media and military from 1990 to 2000 to cement the former president's iron-fisted rule. *Reuters*

50,000 Russian women sex slaves in China, S. Asia

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia—Russia's poverty-ridden far east is the main supplier of sex slaves for the Asian Pacific region, with over 50,000 women exploited in China and South-East Asian countries, according to experts here.

"The ease with which slaves are exported is astounding. A whole exporting system has been developed here," the region's deputy prosecutor general Konstantin Chaika lamented, adding that dozens of slave-traders from both Russia and China take part in the human trafficking.

It is almost impossible to find the women and return them home, even if their relatives promptly alert the law enforcement agencies, the head of the local search FSB security service search team, who identified himself as Alexei S., said.

The sex slaves are often sold out of China and disappear without a trace.

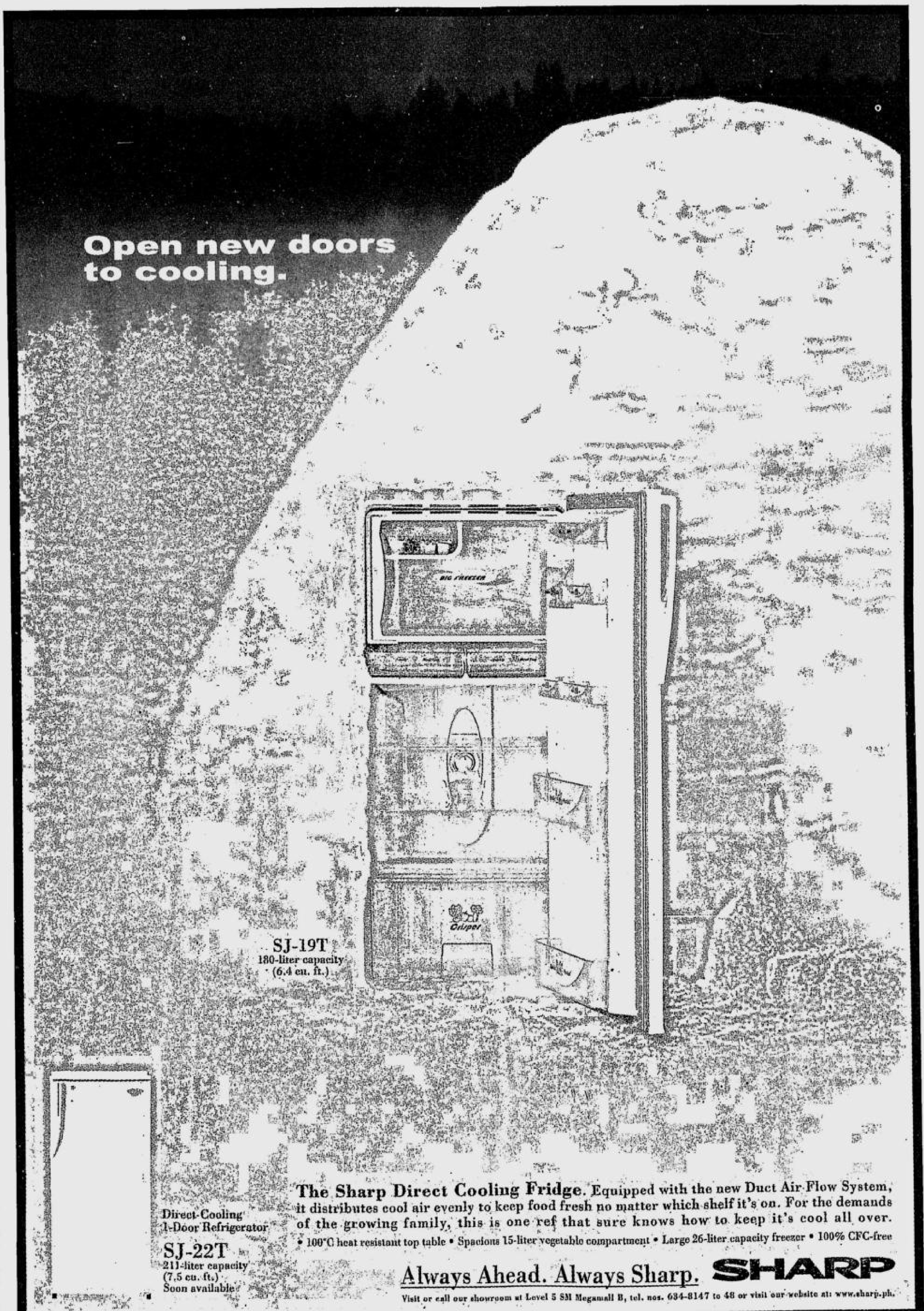
"So far, the only example of success we have are the three girls who were returned home to Primorye from Myanmar (Burma)," Alexei said, adding that the FSB security service had had to smuggle the girls out in secret after they spent three months in a brothel.

The girls left home in hopes of a high-paying job abroad, aided by a Russian employment agency that arranged their transport to China. However, once in China, their passports were taken away and the girls learned their fate.

In Burma, where the kidnapped women were sold, one of the three managed to make a call to her father, a well-known Primorye writer, who alerted the authorities.

But more often sex slaves vanish, beaten to death for disobedience, their bodies well hidden, Alexei said, adding that there are no official estimates of how many Russian women fell victim to such treatment.

In June, the Russian foreign ministry was told that three women, natives of Primorye, were hospitalized in Lupanshui, China, after they were cruelly beaten up by security guards in a bar where they were working. *AFP*



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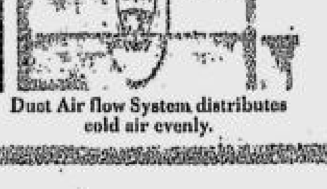
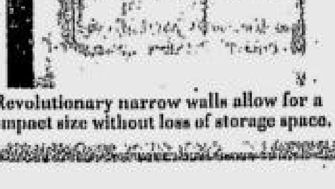
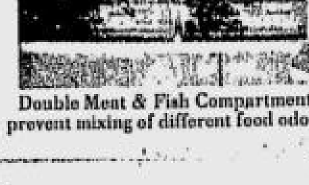

Duct Air flow System distributes cold air evenly.


Revolutionary narrow walls allow for a compact size without loss of storage space.


Double Meat & Fish Compartments prevent mixing of different food odors.

BASTILLE DAY REUTERS

A fireworks show is set off near the Eiffel Tower to celebrate Bastille Day, France's national holiday in Paris, July 14. Thousands earlier lined the city's Champs Elysees to greet the annual military parade.

Japanese taken aback by 'fuss' over textbook

TOKYO—Japanese citizens stand either dismayed or defiant after furious outbursts by Asian neighbors over a controversial history textbook accused of glossing over the nation's wartime atrocities, observers say.

"Ordinary people are taken aback to see Chinese and South Koreans making such a fuss" over the book, said historian and author Hideaki Kase.

South Korea has suspended military and other exchanges with Japan due to Tokyo's refusal to make certain amendments to the history text. China has also expressed "strong indignation" over the Japanese stance.

But accusations from overseas "are helping to advertise the book," Kase said, arguing it was selling well thanks to people's "curiosity" rather than their support for it.

The book plays down historical events such as the 1937 Nanjing massacre in China and the use of hundreds of thousands of Asian women as sex slaves for Japanese troops.

Originally intended for junior high school pupils aged 13 to 15, the textbook became an instant bestseller when it was put up for general sale at book stores nationwide on June 4.

Over half a million copies have already been snatched up, according to the publishing house, Fuso Publishing Inc. of Tokyo.

"It is small wonder people feel like reading the book following the media coverage it has received," said Kazunori Tanaka, secretariat chief of the Conference of Labor Unions, a group of 60 unions in Utsunomiya city, eastern Japan.

Campaigning against a planned adoption of the book at public schools in the region, Tanaka warned "nationalism, which had been suppressed, is now spreading in triumph."

"Japan failed to take a long hard look at past actions and regret them sincerely, and this has led to the revival of the notion of the Empire with the emperor at its center," he argued.

Yukio Wani, a former school teacher who is also against rightwing ideology, noted there was "an emerging nationalism among people in their 20s and 30s."

"The Japanese now feel like assuming a more defiant attitude," no matter how strongly other nations complain, Wani said.

"Many people here consider calls for amendments by China and Korea an interference in domestic issues," he said.

Victims of military force never forget their pain, said Zhao Dawei, a researcher on Japanese issues at the China Institute of International Studies in Shanghai.

"When a nation of people has suffered a great pain it is not something that disappears in 60 years," he said, adding no nation however "wants to remember the inglorious parts of its history."

"It's natural that Japan wants to forget," he said.

The book was penned by the Society for History Textbook Reform, a group made up of avowed nationalist historians who assert the country has become too "masochistic" in assessing its past. *AFP*

Police frustrated in search for Levy

WASHINGTON—Police are continuing their hunt for missing former intern Chandra Levy amid a deepening rift with Gary Condit, a 53-year-old member of Congress romantically linked with her.

Beleaguered Condit, tracked by journalists and dissected by Washington pundits, is not a suspect nor is the investigation classified as criminal.

But police, who have so far come up with no explanation as to why the 24-year-old from California disappeared without trace in late April, could barely contain their frustration.

Condit's lawyer Abbe Lowell announced Friday that Condit, who represents Modesto, California, home of the Levy family; had submitted to a privately administered lie detector test and passed.

Lowell said Condit had cooperated fully with police and the investigation should now refocus on others "who can provide real clues" to what happened to Levy.

Lowell's statement appears unlikely to have achieved its aim. So far, police have been unwilling to criticize the Condit camp. But top officials are now grumbling about Condit's lack of cooperation, according to media reports.

Assistant Police Chief Terrance Gainer said investigators were "bamboozled" by the private polygraph test after police had been urging the congressman to undergo a test administered by the FBI.

In a statement, the police department said it had not been informed of the test in advance and Chief Charles Ramsey had questioned its validity.

"Chief of police Ramsey noted that (the questions asked) may have not been all of the questions the department felt were pertinent in this case. He further stated that the police should have had input during the course of questioning under controlled conditions," the statement said.

Condit, married with two children, has preserved a business-as-usual public image throughout the investigation, ducking in and out of his Washington apartment block through a melee of journalists to attend to Congressional duties.

And all that despite reports that police are following up claims from a half a dozen women who say they have had affairs with the man who was forthright in his condemnation of former president Bill Clinton for his relationship with intern Monica Lewinsky.

But police have declined to comment on media reports that Condit is now being investigated for witness tampering and suborning perjury stemming from an alleged 10-month affair with a San Francisco flight attendant which the Congressman has denied.

Anne Marie Smith, 39, has told investigators that Condit asked her to lie about their affair to investigators.

As the probe continues, evidence that colleagues in Congress may be turning against him surfaced earlier in the week when a Republican member of the House of Representatives called on Condit to resign, accusing him of obstructing justice in the investigation.

"It is becoming increasingly apparent Congressman Condit's actions have obstructed an ongoing police investigation," Representative Bob Barr, a conservative from Georgia, said in a statement Thursday.

"For this reason, I believe he should resign rather than bring further discredit on the House of Representatives."

Levy came to Washington last year to serve as an intern with the Federal Bureau of Prisons and was last seen April 30th. A search of her apartment turned up her packed luggage, jewelry, credit cards and 30 dollars in cash. Only her keys were missing. *AFP*

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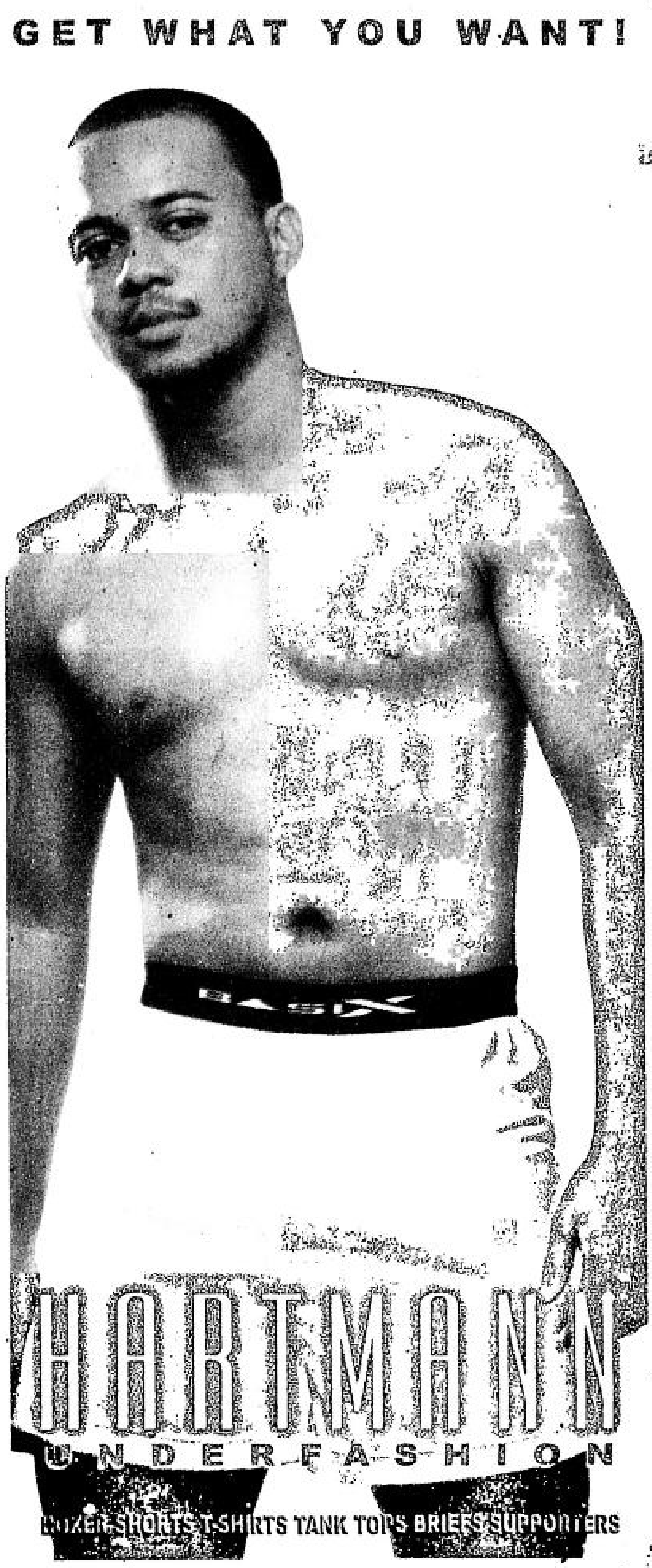

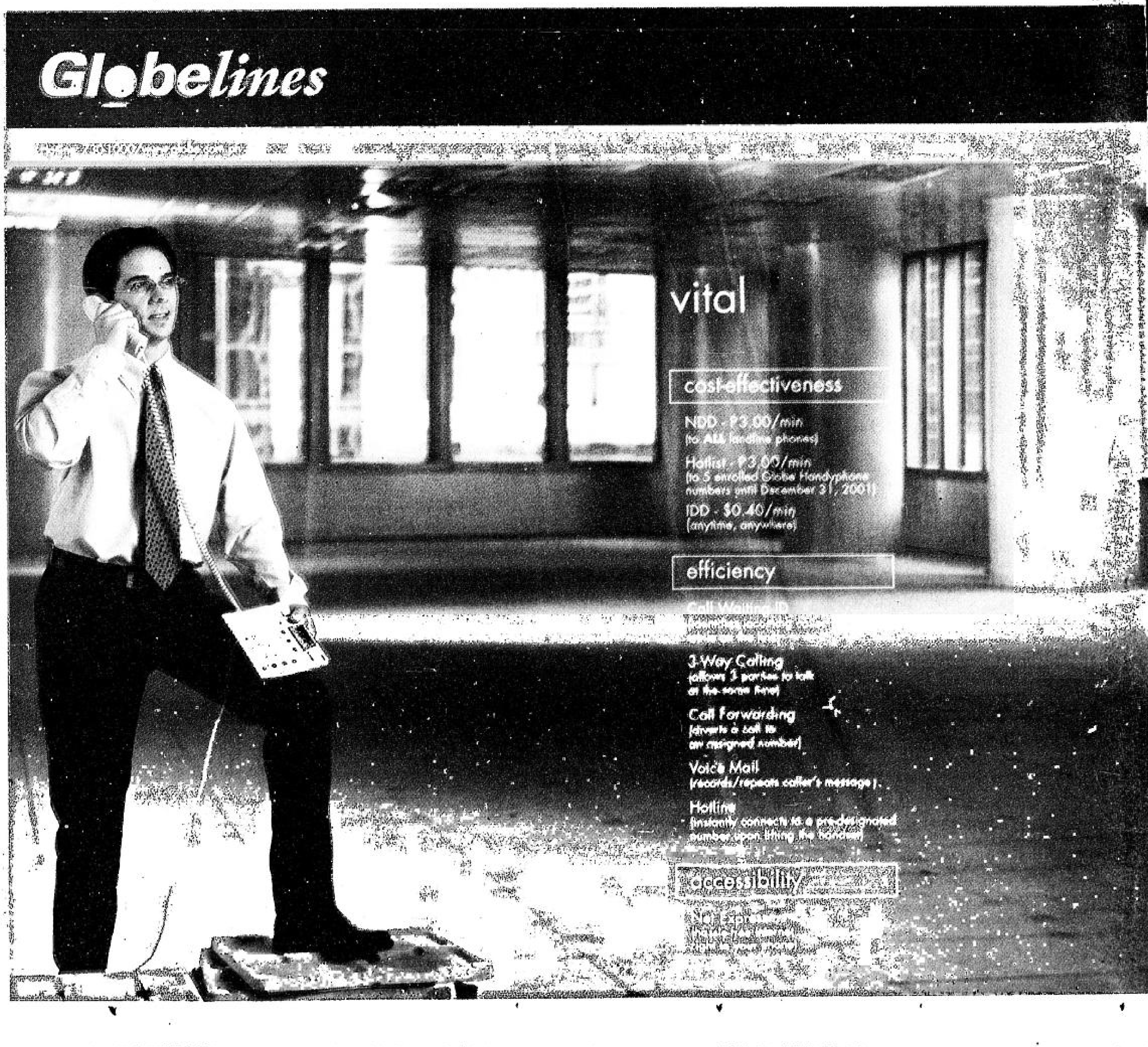
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accessibility

US interceptor missile hits 'warhead' in test

WASHINGTON—In a boost for US President George W. Bush's hopes to build a defense against ballistic missile attack, the Defense Department scored a hit Saturday with an interceptor that soared into space from a tiny Pacific isle and destroyed its target, a mock nuclear warhead.

It was the first test of the "hit-to-kill" technology the administration hopes will become a key element of a missile defense network. Of three previous tests in 1999 and 2000, two failed and one succeeded.

"The early indication we have is that everything worked," Air Force Lt. Gen. Ronald Kadish, director of the Pentagon's missile defense programs, told a news conference less than an hour after the intercept.

He said it would take many weeks to analyze all the test data, but initial indications were that "we hit pretty accurately." He said the successful test would not alter the Defense Department's plans to continue testing the technology.

Kadish said the next test, scheduled for October, might include some additional complexities such as adding more decoys, which in an actual attack would be used to attempt to fool the missile interceptor.

At 11:09 p.m., exactly the scheduled moment of collision between the interceptor and the warhead, an enormous white flash appeared at the planned impact point 230 km above the earth's surface.

Military officials said minutes later that their tracking data showed a direct hit.

Reporters monitoring the test from a video-teleconference room in the Pentagon could see the white flash. The video then switched to the mission control room on Kwajalein Atoll in the Pacific, where military and civilians officials who were running the test broke into a loud cheer, clapped hands and punched fists into the air.

The interceptor missile was launched from Kwajalein 21 minutes after its target, a modified Minuteman II intercontinental-range missile equipped with a mock warhead, roared toward the heavens from a launch pad 7,725 km away at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California.

Navigating by the stars and by information transmitted from a ground station on Kwajalein, the interceptor's weapon, known as a "kill vehicle," rammed the mock warhead. The force of impact obliterated the warhead, thus the term "hit-to-kill," as distinct from other approaches such as detonating an explosive in the flight path of the target.

The "kill vehicle," a 54-kg device with its own propulsion, communications, infrared seeker and guidance and control systems, separated from the rocket booster as planned and reached the planned impact point in space about eight minutes after the launch from Kwajalein. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Convicted US academic still in China

BEIJING—The deportation of US academic Li Shaomin convicted of espionage by a Chinese court was unlikely to take place on Sunday, a US source said. Beijing's No. 1 Intermediate People's Court on Saturday convicted Li of spying for China's arch rival Taiwan, and ordered him to be deported rather than jailed, but one day later there was still no word on his departure. According to previous practice, China would probably want to issue a written verdict before deporting him, which can take up to five days, he said. *AFP*

Middle East diplomacy shifts to Cairo

JERUSALEM—Middle East peace diplomacy shifts on Sunday to Cairo, where Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres are due to have separate talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Sources in Mubarak's office said it was unlikely Arafat would meet Peres, who is also due to discuss the Israeli-Palestinian crisis with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher. The latest diplomatic maneuvering came as violence continued in the West Bank and near Gaza, where the Israeli army said late on Saturday that Palestinians fired a mortar at the Israeli collective farm, Kibbutz Nahal Oz. No injuries were reported. An 8-year-old Palestinian girl was injured by gunfire during confrontations in the divided West Bank city of Hebron and witnesses reported gunfire near the town of Bethlehem. They said two Palestinian houses were damaged by Israeli gunfire that the Israeli army said followed a Palestinian assault on one of its patrols. *Reuters*

UN court envoys to probe atrocities

BELGRADE—Representatives of the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague will travel to Yugoslavia next month to question Serbs over atrocities committed by Kosovo separatists, Serb Justice Minister Vladan Batic said Saturday. The envoys of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) will "question 58 Serbs on crimes committed by members of the KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army)" in Serbia's mainly ethnic Albanian south, Batic was quoted as saying by the Yanjug news agency. They will visit the region from Aug. 7-17, added Batic, who was talking to leaders of his Serbian Christian Democrat party. A Serbian association representing families of the disappeared says that over 1,300 Serbs went missing either during the conflict in the region between ethnic Albanian fighters and Serbian security forces, or since the province came under UN control in June 1999. *AFP*

N. Irish peace hopes stagger on

WESTON PARK, England—Northern Ireland peace hopes staggered on with British Prime Minister Tony Blair reporting progress but no breakthrough on Saturday in crisis talks with rival Protestant and Roman Catholic politicians. Under the threat of growing violence and an August deadline for governing the British province, Blair said the latest round of negotiations with the feuding parties ended with the landmark 1998 Good Friday peace pact still intact. *Reuters*

Iraq marks 33rd National Day

THE REPUBLIC of Iraq marks it 33rd National Day tomorrow triumphant over its defiance against new American and British proposals that would have tightened the screws on the country's economic activities in exchange for the entry of more consumer commodities into the country, which has been under severe economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council for the past 11 years. The UN Security Council, however, has recently put off indefinitely the vote on the proposals after encountering stiff opposition from Iraq and its allies.

Duma OKs crucial land code

MOSCOW—Russia's parliament on Saturday backed a crucial land code bolstering President Vladimir Putin's reforms by overturning a Soviet-era ban on land sales.

Approval of the second reading of the legislation, fiercely opposed by the Communist Party and their Agrarian allies, was the final measure of the State Duma or lower house's spring session during which many laws promoted by Putin were passed.

The State Duma ploughed through more than 140 amendments to the code, with liberals and pro-government parties fending off Communist attempts to scuttle the legislation.

The code, under discussion for seven years in post-Soviet Russia, does not concern farmland, a highly sensitive issue in a country once subject to forced collectivization.

It must now be approved on a third reading, considered a formality, at the Duma's autumn session. It will then be submitted to the Federation Council (upper house) and signed into law by Putin.

The bill roused the fury of Communists who denounced the 1990s sell-offs of industry, some at knock-down prices, under ex-president Boris Yeltsin. They feared the law would lead to the country being bought up by foreigners and wealthy Russians.

"He (Putin) is resolving in the same way the issue of land which we have defended with our blood for thousands of years," Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov said during the debate. "You cannot watch this dreadful scene without shaking in disgust."

Zhores Alferov, Nobel physics prize winner and a Communist member of parliament, urged the chamber to think hard. *Reuters*

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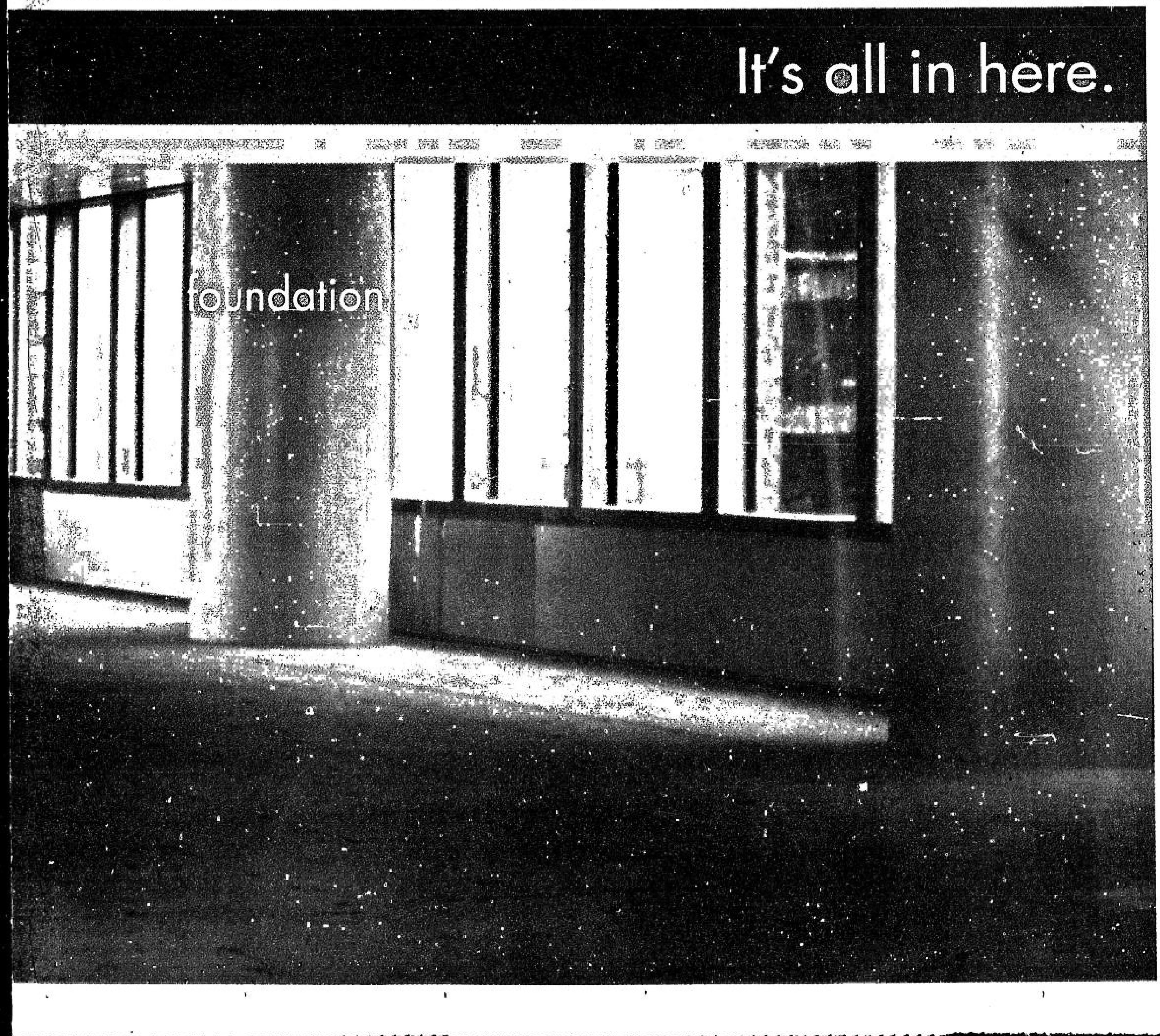
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Help stop Vizcaya mining, bishop appeals to Gloria

By Melvin Gascon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—A Catholic bishop here has called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to help stop the proposed mining operations in gold and copper-rich upland areas near the border of Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino.

Bishop Ramon Villena made the appeal amid reports that personnel from the Australian firm Climax-Arimco Mining Corp. (CAMC) remained stationed in Barangay Didipio, the site of proposed large-scale mining operations in the outskirts of Kasibu town.

"I appeal the help of your office to totally stop the mining operation in the area," Villena asked the President in a letter, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER.

Villena, whose diocese covers the two neighboring provinces, expressed concern that CAMC's continued presence in the area "disturbs the peaceful life of the poor farmers of Didipio."

"(CAMC is) offering promises to convince the people for its mining activities," he said. "We know very well that large-scale mining is nothing but anti-community, anti-indigenous people, anti-environment and anti-human dignity."

Since 1992, CAMC has been pushing its mining bid in Didipio. It is scheduled to start large-scale mining activities after obtaining an environmental compliance certificate and a resolution of approval from the barangay council in 1999.

With part of the facilities and equipment already in place in 1999, CAMC was about to conduct open-pit mining operations atop Dinkidi hill in Didipio.

The firm reportedly named the hill as such as it was derived from an Australian aborigine term that means "the real thing."

However, claiming alleged connivance and manipulation by concerned agencies, villagers made up of settlers from Ifugao, Kalanguya, Ibaloi and Bugkalot tribes, opposed the project.

Organizing themselves as the Didipio Earth Savers Movement, the villagers filed a petition before the Commission on Elections calling for a referendum on the planned mining operations.

Villena cited in his letter how the Regional Development Council here, chaired by Nueva Vizcaya Gov. Rodolfo Agbayani, rejected CAMC's mining proposal on Oct. 27, 2000 after the council discovered that the planned mining operations did not conform to the regional physical framework plan.

Citing the Mining Act of 1995, Department of Environment and Natural Resources officials admitted that the Didipio forest was considered a "critical watershed" as it lies above the multimillion-peso Addalam irrigation project in Quirino. Thus, it is "closed to any form of mining."

Without the RDC endorsement, CAMC could not push through with its operations as required by the environmental certificate of compliance, and is left without any option but to call off the project, officials said.

Despite negative indications and the supposed losses it has claimed for the delay in its operations, the firm chose to stay in the area.

The residents feared that mine wastes would inundate and pollute their rice lands, and threaten the health of their families.

The area between Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino, with an estimated 68.4 percent of Cagayan Valley's gold reserves, has been a favorite target of foreign-based mining companies.

Gov't-owned guns sold to politicians

DIGOS CITY—While policemen in Sultan Kudarat province are craving for new firearms to fight criminality, government-owned guns have allegedly found their way into the hands of politicians.

A number of high-powered firearms were discovered missing from the armory of the Sultan Kudarat police command. An initial investigation revealed that these were now in the hands of some politicians in Maguindanao.

Senior Supt. Agapito Salvador, Sultan Kudarat police chief, refused to identify the politicians who, he said, bought the firearms from persons with access to the armory.

A few days ago, Salvador ordered an inventory of firearms stocked at the armory of the provincial headquarters at Camp Amado Dumlao in Isulan town.

The inventory showed that at least 12 high-powered firearms, including a .30 cal. machine gun, were nowhere to be found.

SPO3 Rizalino Dar Jr., supply and logistics officer, failed to account for the missing firearms. He was ordered detained.

During the interrogation, Dar admitted selling the firearms to politicians shortly before the aMay 14 elections.

Salvador said charges of fraud and malversation of public property have been filed against the armory custodian.

The politicians named by Dar would also be investigated.

Allan A. Nawal, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Stop to Lanao watershed logging urged

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez has strongly recommended to President Macapagal-Arroyo to issue an order stopping logging in the Lake Lanao watershed.

Alvarez also asked the President to order the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao to stop transporting logs outside the region, especially to Cagayan de Oro where anti-logging activists have set up barricades since April.

Alvarez told the dzMM radio program "Bantay Kalikasan" that the President is amenable to the idea.

The Lake Lanao watershed, situated in the boundaries of Lanao del Sur, Bukidnon and Cagayan de Oro, is a vital ecosystem in Mindanao.

It feeds water to Lake Lanao, which supplies most of the electricity of Mindanao.

"This is a victory for the environment," says Orlan Ravanera, chair of Task Force Macajalar, an environmentalist coalition here.

The task force and other multisectoral groups have set up barricades in front of Manresa, Xavier University to stop the entry of logging trucks from the ARMM.

Ravanera said loggers have already cut more than 1,000 truckloads of trees from the Lake Lanao watershed. *Froilan Gallardo, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Cordillera still among poorest

Gov't economist clarifies Neda on Club 20 report

By Vincent Cabreza and Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Is the Cordillera still poor enough to deserve a really high wage increase?

A government economist here warned the Regional Tripartite Wage and Productivity Board (RTWPB) not to read too much from a National Economic and Development Authority report in May that removed all Cordillera provinces from Club 20, the list of the country's poorest provinces.

A Neda report suggested that the 1997 poverty index already signified high growth improvements in the economies of Benguet, Mt. Province, Ifugao, Kalinga, Apayao and Abra.

The poverty index indicated an 8.5 percentage drop in the incidence of poor Cordillera families. This meant that the government recognized only 110,142 families as living below the poverty threshold of P12,836.

Labor unions here raised fears that the May report may be used to soften any pay increase in the Cordillera.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas has activated all regional wage boards in response to a proposed measure seeking a P125 across-the-board national wage increase. Sen. Juan Flavier sponsored the measure.

But Leon Dacanay, Neda assistant regional director, said the Neda assessment was based on a "one-line evaluation" issued from Manila that described the Cordillera's economic performance as "better off" than its neighbors outside of Manila.

In fact, the Department of Labor and Employment itself announced a sudden downturn in regional economies as early as April this year.

Brenda Villafuerte, DOLE regional director, said employment in the Cordillera has been hit hard by a demand slump that slowed down the semiconductor industry last year.

The Baguio Economic Zone is the major backbone of the region's economy, contributing 98 percent to the Cordillera's annual exports.

Villafuerte, in an April press briefing here, said last year's unemployment rose to 9 percent due to the foreign market trends, although it stabilized by the end of the second quarter of 2000 to 7.9 percent.

Authorities also noted a 200-percent hike in applications for overseas work last year, occurring just as the semiconductor slump began to reverberate across other Cordillera industries, according to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

Nonette Villanueva, POEA Cordillera administrator, said their office processed 3,870 overseas applications, an "unusual" increase from the 1,276 applicants processed in 1999.

Benjamin Navarro, regional director of the National Statistics Coordinating Board (NSCB), said the region should anticipate an updated poverty threshold report, which may include these inputs.

Banaue suffers tourism slump

BANAUE, Ifugao—Where have all the tourists gone?

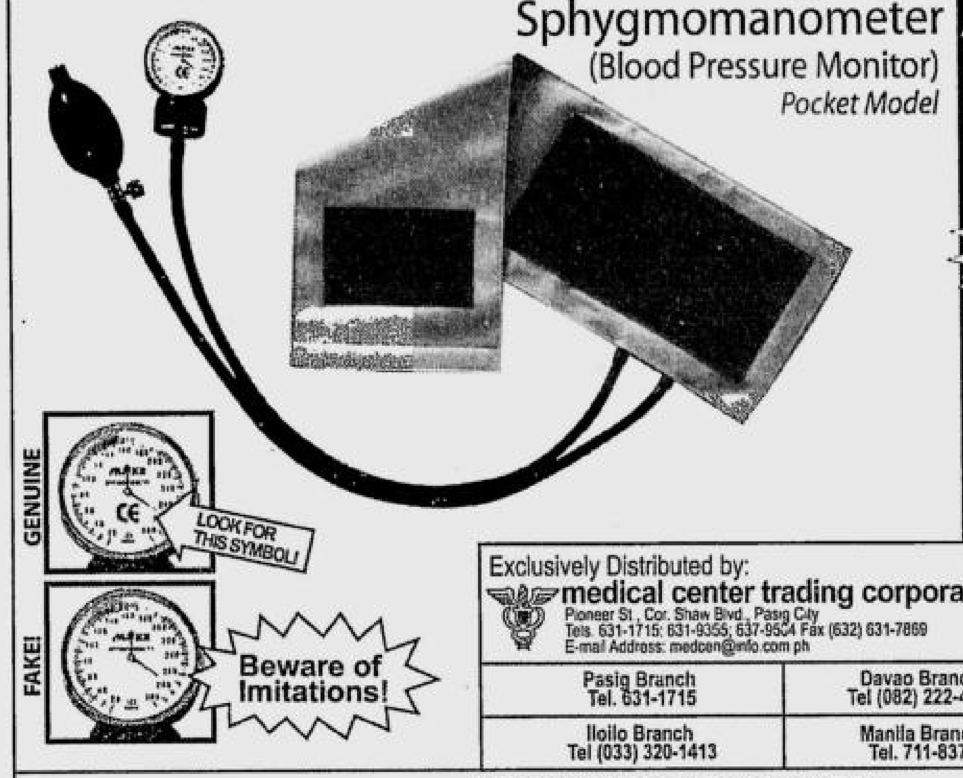
The absence of tourists is an unusual sight in this tourist town known for its centuries-old rice terraces.

Since the hostage crisis in Southern Philippines that started during the last quarter of 1999, the number of tourists has dwindled, local tourism officials said.

Political instability, especially during the impeachment trial of former President Joseph Estrada, has discouraged foreigners from coming, they said.

The economic crisis has also brought about the fall in the number of local tourists.

Jessebel Lacbawan, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau



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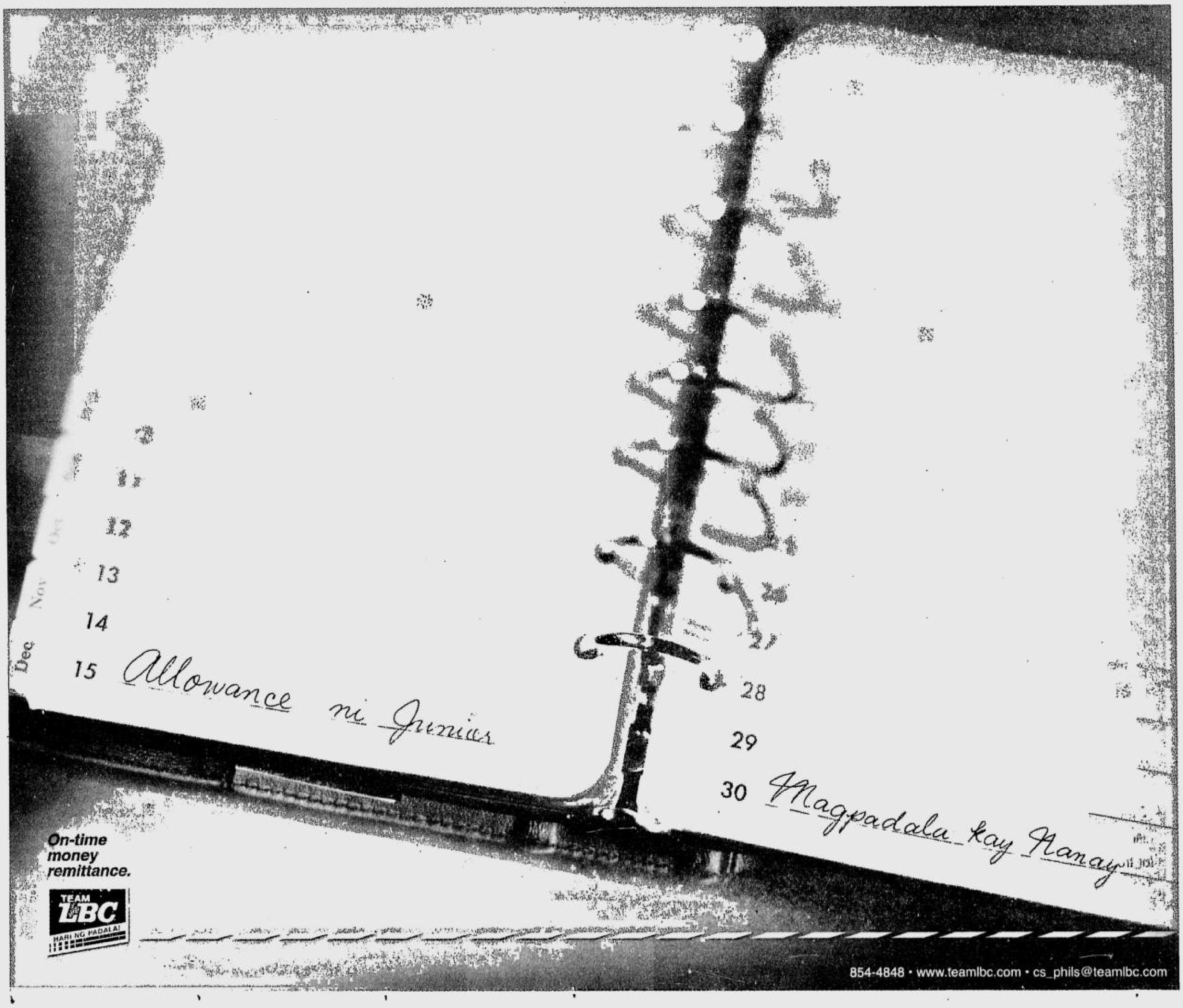

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Relief operations spark radio ratings war

By Roly Embile
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LEGAZPI CITY—At one moment, broadcaster Joselito Brecia was looking forward to a relaxing Saturday night out with friends and a lazy Sunday at home with his family.

But the next moment, he was anchoring an emergency program over radio station dzGB, dispatching a few reporters on standby to their battle posts on the night of June 23 after Mayon Volcano showed signs of a full-blown eruption.

Brecia did his radio show till late in the evening, feeding listeners with live reports on the frantic evacuation of thousands of people in threatened areas from field reporters and vivid descriptions of the eruption.

He also solicited relief goods from donors.

Thus was born the "Oplan Patarabang-tabang (helping each other)."

Around that time, on the other side of the city, Joselito Sanchez, production manager of Radyo Bombo dzLG and host of an evening program "Zona Libre" was preparing to sit down to a leisurely supper when he was jolted by the sudden, ground-shaking thunder proceeding the eruption.

After gathering back his wits, Sanchez sat at the announcer's chair, switched the mike on and pounded on the signature bass drum to launch a similar emergency program.

Backed up by five reporters and three volunteers quickly dispatched on the field, Sanchez stayed on anchor, no different from a field marshal, during the next three hours and in the process launched Bombo Radyo's own relief operation: "Oplan Sagip-Mayon."

In Albay, as in other parts of the country, natural calamities and Christmas spark the most intense competition in the broadcast industry, with radio stations launching their own special programs for relief and public service.

The battle line in this ratings war is drawn not on areas covered by each station but in the hearts and ears of its captive audience down to their pockets.

Bombo Radyo and the People's Broadcasting Network's dzGB are two of the more popular among 16 stations, including two local television stations, based in this city.

And the issue as to which is the better and, therefore, the acknowledged champion in the ratings war, further fuels the pitch battle for listenership.

The province is a special case in point as an apt front for this war because it lies in a region most frequently visited by typhoons and dotted with four dormant volcanoes with Mayon as the lone active one.

Since 1616 until this year, Mayon has erupted 49 times, one of the most violent of which was in 1814 that buried Cagsawa, Albay, and killed some 2,000 residents.

Antonio Arispe, chief of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration field office here, said Bicol used to be in the path of an average of 20 typhoons a year, five of which pack center winds of more than 100 kilometers per hour.

Eager to do good

Bicolano journalists are only too eager to do good and do it in the spirit of healthy competition under such situation as presented by the frequency of natural calamities visited in the region.

Sanchez of Bombo Radyo told the INQUIRER that during last year's Mayon eruption, their Bicol network—including dzNG in Naga City and dzVX in Daet, Camarines Norte—solicited and distributed about P2 million worth of relief goods.

Brecia, on the other hand, said that with relief donors coming from as far north as Catanduanes and the Caramoan Peninsula in Camarines Sur down south in Sorsogon and Northern Samar, they were able to gather and distribute some P40,000 in cash and about P100,000 worth of food items and other relief materials last year.

The relief goods included canned sardines, noodles, used packing cartons, sleeping mats, tents and used clothing.

The one-upmanship between the two media outfits goes beyond contrasting styles of public service and public information.

When dzGB launched its soup kitchen at various evacuation centers giving out free "*goto*" (rice broth) and noodle soup and fed over 16,000 children aged 2 to 12, Bombo Radyo responded with its own "Oplan Tubig Mayon," offering potable water to the evacuees.

But public service, particularly during hard times, has, by no means, been the exclusive mission of the two.

Almost all the rest have been very aggressive players in their own capacities in times of need.

The Church-run dwBS, Radio Veritas-Legazpi, for example, had been at the forefront of relief operations in the past, closely coordinating with the Social Action Center of the Diocese of Legazpi.

Dedicated journalists

Brecia and Sanchez are but two representatives of a particular breed of professional and dedicated journalists raised on the destructive realities of these calamities and the subsequent loss of valuable property and life.

Most present-day journalists in the region, though ambitious and competitive, are sensitive to their environment and to the plight of the poor and the victimized.

They have been molded in the pattern of Eddie Ilarde and Eddie Alanes, two of the more prominent first-generation Bicolano broadcasters who distinguished themselves in public service in radio and later in politics.

Cedric Daep, head of the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council, said the local media had been an integral part of its information campaign in disaster mitigation, advance warning and relief operations.

"In fact, our effort at achieving a zero casualty in times of natural calamity has been due in large part to the cooperation of the media," he said.

Daep said the media had done various functions in support of the government's efforts that could have been impossible to achieve.

Adela Bellen, 60, considers her portable radio one of her best-prized possession.

The sexagenarian, who tends a tomato crop in the 6-km permanent danger zone in Barangay Magapo, Tabaco City, said her radio served as an early warning device before making a dash to safety with a dozen others on June 23 to escape the fire and rocks spewing out of Mayon.

"Had we ignored the radio's advice to immediately evacuate, I could not tell what would have happened to all of us," she said.

"Maybe someday, I will have the chance to thank them," she added.

Relief goods for Mayon victims reported stolen

STO. DOMINGO, Albay—Relief goods for Mayon evacuees have been reported stolen from the warehouse of this town's municipal building.

Senior Insp. Rolando Esguerra, town police chief, who was directed by Mayor Herbie Aguas to investigate the incident, said no robbery had transpired and that the looting was an inside job.

"It is unthinkable how culprits could muster enough courage to perpetrate a robbery involving volumes of items in bulk and in a compound occupied by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police, which are maintaining a 24-hour sentinel," Esguerra said.

Army Cpl. Antonio Ricafort, a member of the Task Force Mayon who was on the roof of the warehouse, testified that no untoward incident occurred that night.

On July 1, the first day of office of Mayor Aguas, municipal social welfare and development officer Ma. Salome Villanueva reported to the police that some relief items were missing.

Villanueva reported the loss of four boxes of canned pork and beans, one box of noodles, four packs of coffee creamer, 19 boxes of corn beef and four bottles of coffee, which amounted to about P25,000.

Romeo Cabria, municipal disaster coordinating council action officer, said the robbers entered the warehouse by destroying a jalousie window.

Police belittled Cabria's statement, saying that the window was already destroyed even before the reported looting took place.

The warehouse padlock was not damaged, police added.

Esguerra recommended to Aguas the creation of a committee to look into the case.

He said the reported incident had put the new administration in an embarrassing situation, particularly in handling relief goods.

It was learned that during Mayon Volcano's eruption in 1993, bags of rice were reported missing inside the town's warehouse and were later found being sold at the public market.

Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

'Feria' ruins P6M in crops, dikes

BACOLOD CITY—At least P6.6 million worth of crops and fishpond dikes was damaged when typhoon "Feria" hit the province's four cities and 10 towns on July 4, according to the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist.

In a report, the OPA pegged damage to rice crops at P2.4 million, affecting 5,430 hectares in the cities of Bago and San Carlos and in the towns of Ilog, Hinigaran, Murcia, La Carlota, San Enrique, La Castellana, Isabela and Valladolid.

About P1.2 million worth of corn was damaged in the municipalities of Don Salvador Benedicto, Hiniran and Murcia and in La Carlota City, covering 314.25 hectares.

The OPA placed the damage to fishpond dikes at P2.2 million, affecting 146 operators in Talisay City and in the EB Magalona, Valladolid and Pontevedra towns.

Damage to fruit trees was estimated at P674,925, covering 208 hectares in Don Salvador Benedicto, Ilog, Hinigaran, Talisay and Murcia.

Feria unleashed its wrath in Negros Occidental, displacing at least 3,200 persons and rendering many towns and cities literally in the dark.

Worst hit by the typhoon was Valladolid town where 1,800 persons were displaced after strong winds destroyed 50 houses and damaged 250 others.

Damage to palay in Valladolid was estimated at P956,435 and vegetables, at P91,500, the OPA report said.

At the height of the typhoon, a power blackout occurred in at least 11 towns and two cities after Feria's winds toppled several electric posts.

Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

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ROUNDUP

Seizure irks Customs

DAVAO CITY—Agents of the National Bureau of Investigation and the National Food Authority again tried to seize some 14,300 bags of rice at the Sta. Ana Wharf here Thursday, angering the local Bureau of Customs chief. The shipment, which was unloaded from the MV Elsie, had earlier been intercepted at the Malalag Port in Davao del Sur and impounded by customs authorities after its consignees failed to present the required documents. Datu Minah Dianalan, customs district collector, said the NFA already knew that the shipment was approved for release after the consignees paid their duties. NBI Director Leoncio Evangelista said his men just acted on information about smuggled rice being unloaded at the wharf.

Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Gov't books sold

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Textbooks marked "government property, not for sale" are being sold at some bookstores here. Several parents found this out when they bought their children's textbooks in one of the private schools here. The marks on the books have been erased. The books are sold at P124 to P150, depending on the grade level. Angelita Leonor, owner of Leonor's Merrimart bookstore, said she did not know that the books were government property. Provincial board member Gerry Ortega has filed a resolution calling for an investigation of the matter.

Jofelle P. Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Mauban fish sanctuary

MAUBAN, Quezon—To help conserve marine resources in the seas off Lamon Bay facing Mauban, Quezon Power Ltd. has put up concrete blocks and slabs around the coastal village of Cagsiay I to serve as fish sanctuary. Mauban Mayor Fernando Llamas said he hoped the fish sanctuary would help hasten the development of the town as a major fish supplier in the province. The municipal government has passed an ordinance declaring the coastal waters off Cagsiay I and nearby villages a restricted zone.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

21 girls rescued

CABANATUAN CITY—National Bureau of Investigation agents rescued 21 girls from various entertainment joints in San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija, on Wednesday night. The girls, aged 13 to 17, were working in seven beerhouses in Barangay Diversion. Four of them were turned over to the Home for Girls in Palayan City and the rest were brought to their families. Pedro Roque Jr., NBI chief for Cabanatuan, said the establishments were using the girls for lewd shows.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Suspected rebels nabbed

DAVAO CITY—An alleged leader of the communist New People's Army was wounded while three others were captured in two separate military operations in Davao City and Compostela Valley. Leonardo Tampos alias Ka Putik, alleged leader of an Armed Propaganda Team under the NPA's Front Committee 52 in Southern Mindanao, was wounded in a clash with soldiers of the 73rd Infantry Battalion in Barangay Malamba, Marilog District, on Wednesday. In Laak, Compostela Valley, patrolling soldiers of the 72nd IB captured three NPA members, identified as Ka Enor, Ka Alex and Ka Juvy, on Tuesday.

Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

3,000 CDs seized

DAVAO CITY—National Bureau of Investigation agents confiscated more than 3,000 pirated compact discs (CDs) from sidewalk vendors here Friday. NBI regional director Leoncio Evangelista said the owners of the pirated CDs and video CDs were caught by surprise as the raiders swooped down on the sidewalks of San Pedro, Ilustre, Uyanguren, Legaspi, Anda, and Bolton Streets.

Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

All-for-people pact

KIDAPAWAN CITY—Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol and Representatives Emelou Taliño-Santos and Gregorio Ipong signed a historic memorandum of agreement vowing to speed up the delivery of social services in the province. "All for the people, the people above all," Piñol said Friday after meeting with the two representatives at the Rembrandt Hotel in Manila. Taliño-Santos and Ipong agreed with Piñol's proposal to open up their district offices in the provincial capitol to coordinate development efforts in the province.

Jeffrey M. Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE:PAGASA

Metro Manila HI 33° Lo 24°	**Baguio** HI 23° Lo 16°	**Tuguegarao** HI 32° Lo 22°	**Laoag** HI 32° Lo 23°
Clark Zone HI 31° Lo 23°	**Tagaytay** HI 30° Lo 23°	**Legazpi** HI 31° Lo 24°	**Calapan** HI 32° Lo 23°
Bacolod HI 31° Lo 25°	**Roxas** HI 32° Lo 25°	**Cebu** HI 31° Lo 25°	**Tacloban** HI 32° Lo 24°
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Compiled by: Chona B. Galang, PDI Research/07/16/01

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Divers expose rampant coral poaching in Subic

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—The famous dive sites in Subic Bay here are being stripped of corals due to poaching and destructive fishing methods, a group of divers and dive center operators warned.

In a statement, John de Sadelair, an American locator operating a dive center here and who leads a crusade to protect the bay's marine resources, said the reefs were being stripped by divers who sell the corals to tourists.

Sadelair said his group has found evidence of dynamite and cyanide fishing, as well as spear hunting, in the dive sites.

He said officials of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and maritime authorities have already been informed about the condition of the bay's reefs, but his group has yet to receive reports of concrete actions.

"The once plentiful and undamaged corals (around the) SBMA are sold everywhere in the bay area, even inside the freeport. I did inform the maritime authorities at Subic about this several times but until now, they have yet to verify the facts," he said.

Sadelair said his group had earlier warned SBMA Chair Felicito Payumo about the rampant coral poaching in the bay.

He said that in April, Payumo formed a coordinating body composed of divers, dive center operators, the SBMA's law enforcement and ecology departments and the Philippine Coast Guard to look into the problem.

But Sadelair claimed that the body "has not made any steps to go after the poachers."

"My wife and I had spent 12 years of our lives in Subic Bay and it would really be very sad to witness its rapid destruction in the hands of a few unscrupulous fishermen and divers," he said.

He said Subic might lose its popularity as one of the best dive sites in Asia if the destruction of corals is not stopped.

Sadelair said his dive clients were "shocked" when they saw local boats arriving on the beach loaded with corals for sale to tourists.

Some of these corals find their way to Bataan and other parts of Zambales, he said.

"The selling of corals is prohibited in most parts of the world because they take between 10 and 50 years to grow back. Every dive we make, we hear dynamite explosions nearby. Frightened divers abruptly leave the area and don't come back," he said.

PDI Central Luzon Desk

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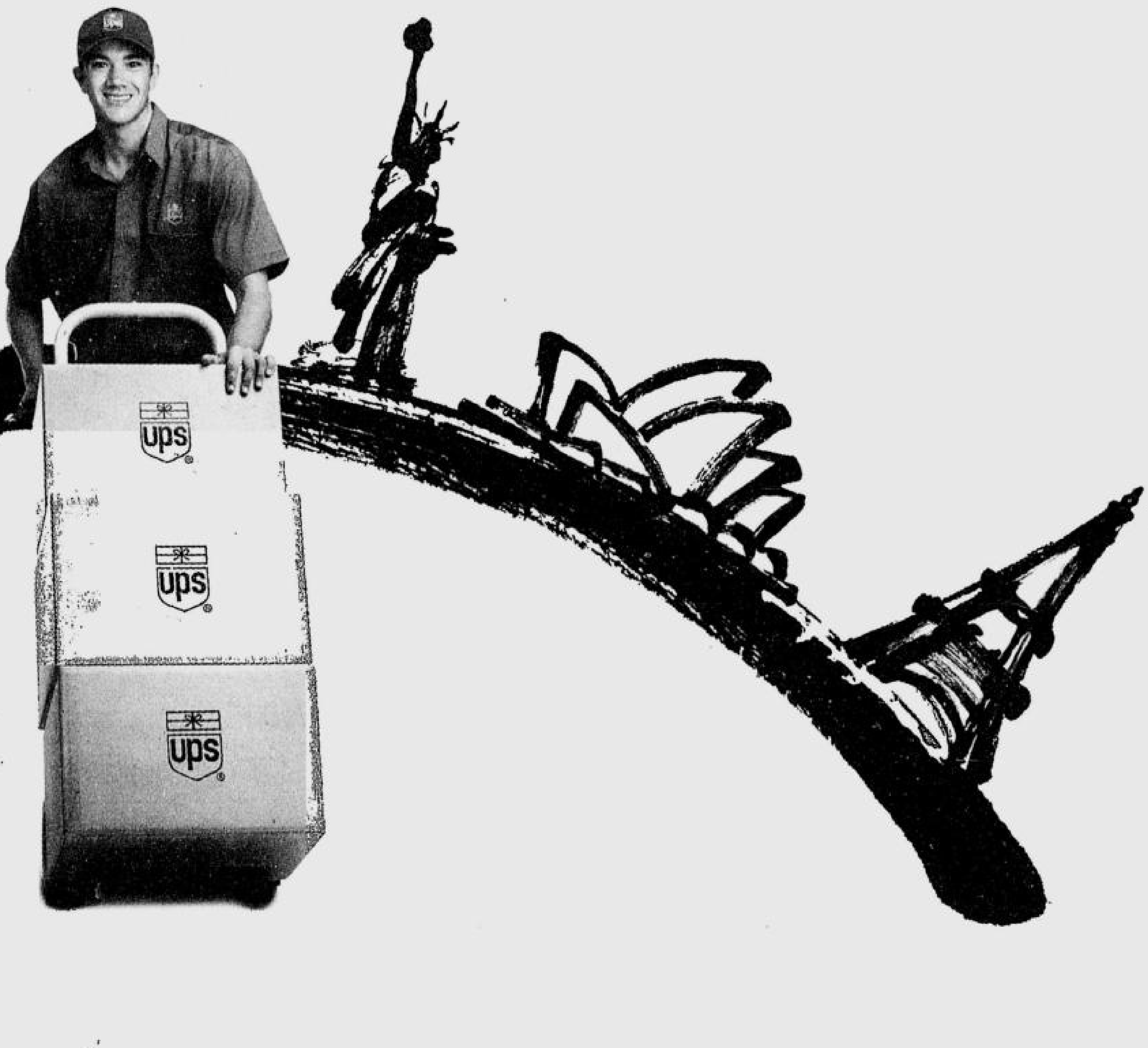

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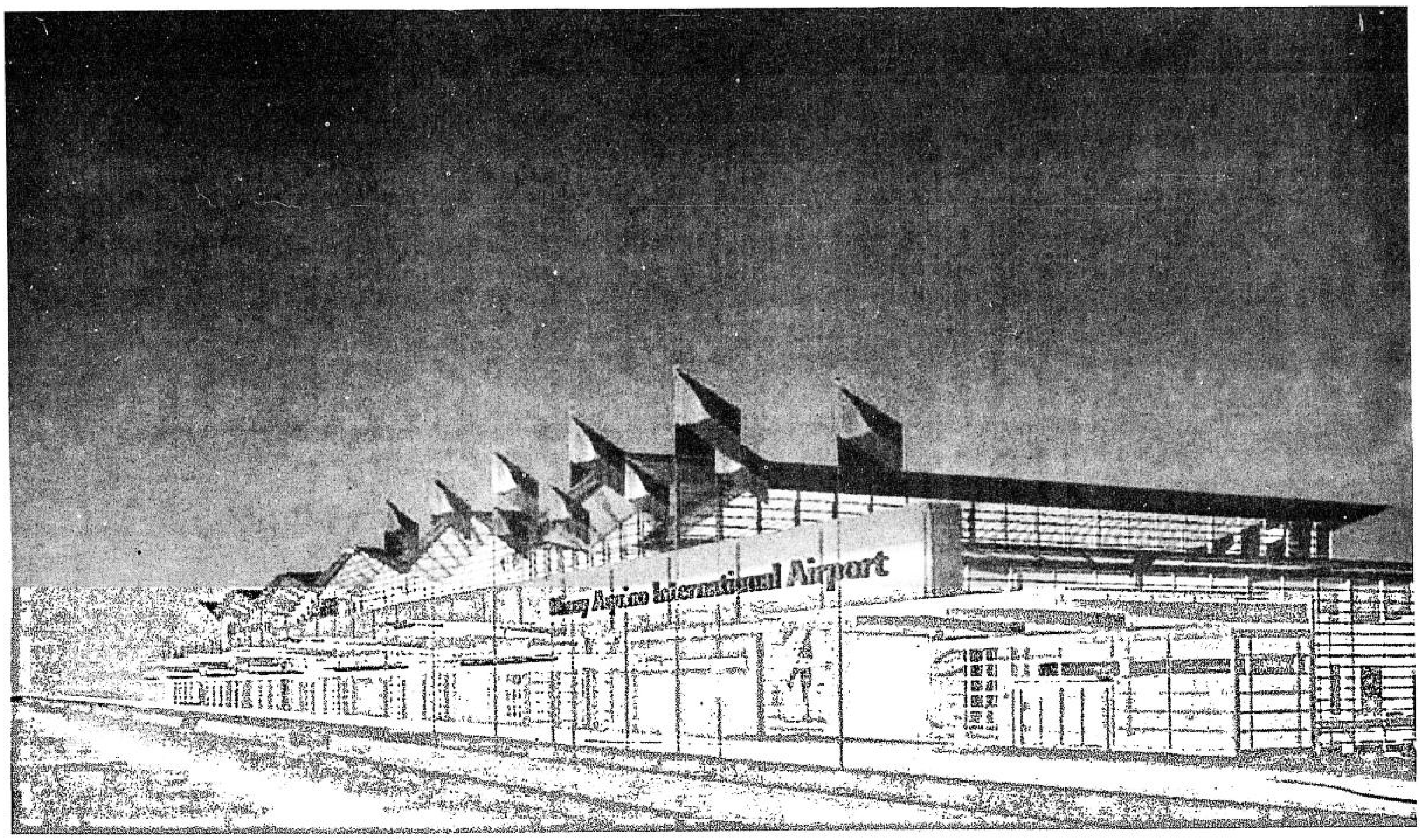

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**Unit Manager
***Sales Manager
****New Business Manager

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Cedar NBO

Evangeline S. Tiu***
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Loretta R. De Austria
Birch NBO

Ma. Christine C. Lee**
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Osmanthus NBO

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Erap slams Gloria for prejudging case

(From page A1)

defense counsel added.

"What death penalty are we talking about? The guy is presumed innocent. She may not even be President when the judgment on the case becomes final," the former senator said.

"It's presumptuous. It's possible that he may be acquitted. And if he is convicted, we don't even know who will be President by then," he added.

He also claimed that the statement "makes it harder" for the defense, because the court may think that the President is for Estrada's conviction.

Former Supreme Court Justice Serafin Cuevas, another Estrada lawyer, said Ms Macapagal's remark "did not sound right" given her previous statements offering the hand of reconciliation to the opposition.

"This will bring more disagreements. It's as though he's about to be convicted," said Cuevas of his client, adding that Ms Macapagal could have been more diplomatic.

Estrada, in his phone interview, reiterated that he was innocent, adding that "the charges against me are all politically motivated."

Over the weekend, the deposed President said he believed a conviction in his plunder case was certain.

'Just acquit him'

For a change, key players of People Power II and militant groups joined the Estrada camp in criticizing President Macapagal, but for a different reason.

"Why hold the trial at all if that's going to be the case? Why don't we just acquit (Estrada) now and save ourselves all the trouble?" said Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr.

Ocampo of Bayan Muna said the statement "would send the wrong signals" since the Sandiganbayan has yet to start Estrada's trial. So far, the disgraced President has only been arraigned.

Medardo Roda, head of the Pinagkaisang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Opereytors Nationwide (Piston), described the President as a "meddler who should stay out of the issue."

"What kind of President is she? The case has barely started, and now here she is announcing to one and all that she'll commute Estrada's sentence," he said in Filipino.

Saddened

Leonard de Vera, a member of the team of private prosecutors in Estrada's aborted impeachment trial, said the President's statement showed her administration's "lack of political will" to prosecute her predecessor.

"The statement is equivalent to a concession between the government and the Estrada camp," he told the INQUIRER.

Fr. Raul "Puti" Enriquez of Gomburza said his group was "very saddened" by the report.

"It seems that we can't really expect justice in this country especially when big fish are involved," he said.

He said the President should reconsider her stand since "it shows that the government is afraid of Estrada's ghost."

"Let's not talk about commutation. Estrada's corruption and plundering have made the poor's lives more miserable," he urged her.

De Vera said the President has "miscalculated the sentiments of the people even before the court could show the magnitude of Estrada's (alleged crime)."

'Seek repeal'

Saguisag challenged Ms Macapagal to seek the repeal of the death penalty in Congress and include this call in her State of the Nation Address (Sona) later this month.

"She should place herself where her mouth is (sic) by commuting all the death sentences of those concerned in Muntinlupa," Saguisag said.

"If she is serious in her gratuitous statement, why not make it part of the program in her Sona and strongly appeal to Congress to repeal the death penalty," Saguisag said.

Andaya said he doubted that Ms Macapagal had made the remarks, which were first reported by The Daily Tribune, quoting an unnamed Palace source.

"The President will not do something that will put to naught the gains of Edsa II," said Andaya, who headed the secretariat of the prosecution panel during the aborted impeachment trial.

But Ms Macapagal has always opposed the death penalty. In January, she suspended the scheduled execution of a convicted rapist and later commuted the death sentences of 16 other death row inmates.

She has also commuted the sentences of 358 other inmates who are serving jail terms for other offenses.

Estrada, in contrast, was a staunch advocate of the death penalty. During his term, Manila ended a 23-year moratorium on executions.

Seven convicts were put to death through lethal injection during his presidency, although Estrada also pardoned or commuted the sentences of hundreds more. ***With reports from Volt Contreras, Rocky Nazareno, and AFP***

Crackdown drains pond of 'terrorist fish'–AFP

(From page A1)

jungles.

"It's been shown that pure tactical search and clear operations cannot accomplish our objective of neutralizing the Abu Sayyaf members because they can hide in urban centers," Adan said.

Adan cited the arrest yesterday in Basilan of a certain Anwar Abdul Hamid, believed to be a mid-ranking Abu Sayyaf leader.

"This person carries a price of P1 million on his head," Adan said. "Based on initial reports, he is among those in our order of battle."

Adan said Abdul Hamid was part of the 41 people captured in Basilan and Sulu.

30 released

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said that of the original 71 arrested, 30 had been released because of "weak evidence."

Tiglao said the remaining 41 would be charged either with kidnap for ransom, a crime punishable by death, or with conspiring to commit the crime, particularly in connection with the Dos Palmas and Lamitan abductions.

He did not say how many of the 41 people were actual Abu Sayyaf members.

"We don't distinguish whether they are members or sympathizers. The point is if they are actively supporting the Abu Sayyaf in any way, they are considered conspirators," he said.

Tiglao said there were 200 "pinpointed" civilian supporters of the Abu Sayyaf. They are now being hunted down.

Tiglao placed the Abu Sayyaf's armed members at between 200 and 300, mostly "in the hills."

The Department of Justice has given the Armed Forces of the Philippines the power to effect arrests not only in known Abu Sayyaf lairs in Basilan and Sulu but also in Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga City.

Gepilano said all 23 suspects arrested in Isabela City would be brought to the regional trial court this morning to face summary inquest.

Of the 23, 10 "are really positively involved in Abu Sayyaf, while we are still checking the degree of participation of the rest," Gepilano said.

Under the guidelines issued by the DOJ, charges must be filed against the suspects within 36 hours. The suspects have to be released immediately if this cannot be done.

"We really would like to meet the 36-hour deadline. But we don't have office work on weekends, so the inquest is scheduled for Monday," Gepilano said.

Supt. Simeon Dizon, police chief for Western Mindanao, said a DOJ team was assisting the police in the investigation at the 103rd Brigade headquarters.

No less than Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño has been sent to the area.

Five more lawyers and investigators from the National Bureau of Investigation were sent to the South.

"They are rushing everything," Tiglao said of the filing of charges and the crackdown on the Abu Sayyaf.

"The intention of the drive is to get everybody in the order of battle. In addition, some are pinpointed by the military as people actively supporting the Abu Sayyaf," the presidential spokesperson said.

Dangerous

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said residents hurt by the crackdown could seek the Abu Sayyaf's help.

"If you feel oppressed, the most logical thing for you to do is to find people who could help you get revenge at the least. And that is very dangerous," Kabalu said.

He said some people in Basilan, Sulu and parts of Western Mindanao viewed the Abu Sayyaf as a legitimate guerrilla organization seeking to liberate the Moros from age-old oppression by the government.

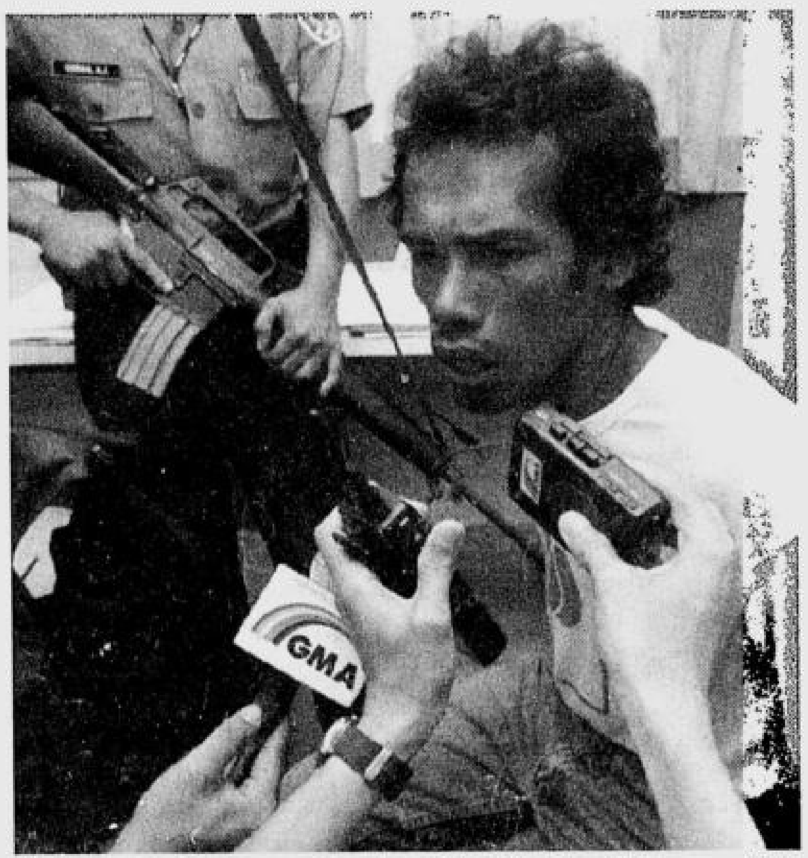
Wilson Fortaleza, Sanlakas president, said the abuses that the military would "inevitably" commit were bound to intensify Moro rebellion.

"Repression of the Moro population will only bring more recruits to the Abu Sayyaf," Fortaleza said.

He explained that the Abu Sayyaf was "a child of the historical injustice suffered by the Bangsamoro people" and of the vacuum created by the surrender of the MNLF that once led the Moro secessionist struggle in the South.

"Unless the Macapagal administration fully recognizes this fact, its military solution to a social problem is bound to fail," Fortaleza said.

Adan had earlier warned that it might take the government around 50 years to eradicate the Abu Sayyaf if its civilian supporters were not dealt with or won over to the government's side.



DAMLI Yusof, a suspected member of the Abu Sayyaf, is presented to journalists following his arrest in Zamboanga City. DENNIS SABANGAN

Kabalu said the government's reward system, either for the arrest or killing of Abu Sayyaf leaders, was taking its toll on innocent civilians.

"We had said before that the reward system will result in human rights violations and it's becoming real now," Kabalu said.

The MILF spokesperson decried the way the soldiers took people from mosques.

Kabalu said storming mosques was uncalled for. "They could have at least waited for the suspects to come out," he said.

Did not take off shoes

The MILF has received reports that soldiers did not even take off their shoes when they entered mosques in Basilan, according to Kabalu.

It is a taboo for anybody to enter the mosque in shoes or slippers.

Fortaleza also warned of more human rights violations as the "state of confusion" continued in Mindanao.

"Initial reports of illegal and warrantless arrests by the military in Basilan are just the start of more abuses to come. The reports could not simply be dismissed given that no less than a Commission on Human Rights director has corroborated them," he said.

The World Muslim Youth Assembly (WMYA), which is based in Saudi Arabia, also assailed the Macapagal administration for allegedly trampling on the rights of Muslims in Basilan.

The group said the arrests were similar to what happened in Bosnia at the height of the ethnic cleansing there.

"People were arrested and tied like animals. The same thing is happening in Basilan," the WMYA said in a statement posted on the Internet.

No violation

Tiglao claimed that so far, no military or police or police personnel had been charged with specific human rights violations in connection with the crackdown.

The presidential spokesperson said the instructions of Justice Secretary Hernando Perez were for the military to be "very, very careful about violating (any right)."

"Any complaint can be filed with the military, police and Commission on Human Rights," Tiglao said.

He stressed that no less than President Macapagal had "promised to act on the complaint provided that it is valid."

So far, there are "generic" or general complaints about the military and police crackdown aired mostly through the media, according to Tiglao.

No deadline

Tiglao said that the crackdown against the Abu Sayyaf would have no deadline as long as there was a "state of lawless violence."

He said Malacañang saw no need to suspend the writ of *habeas corpus*, which is usually done mainly to quell a rebellion.

"We don't consider this a rebellion. We consider it a heinous crime—kidnap for ransom," he said.

The AFP has deployed eight military battalions to hunt down the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan where they are holding 21 hostages, including the four remaining captives taken from the Dos Palmas Resort in Palawan on May 27.

Before Friday's crackdown, the military offensive had been focused on traditional search-and-destroy operations in the field.

"It was not sufficient and so we need this one (crackdown)," Adan said.

The AFP has been criticized for supposedly bungling the campaign against the Abu Sayyaf.

Military officials had previously expressed frustration over the hit-and-run tactics of the Abu Sayyaf, which not only enjoyed an edge in mastery over the terrain but also support from civilian sympathizers.

In Zamboanga City, Mayor Maria Clara Lobregat directed city police chief Supt. Mario Yanga to monitor the influx of people from the Basilan and Sulu.

Military intelligence reports indicated that followers of the bandit group are planning to enter Zamboanga City to elude government saturation drive. ***With reports from Allan A. Nawal and Jonathan F. Ma, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Alert up on imported soy sauce

(From page A1)

supermarkets.

The brands of the 22 recalled products are Lee Kum Kee (Hong Kong), Golden Swan, Golden Mountain, King Imperial, Pearl River Bridge, Jammy Chai, Wanjashan, Golden Mark, Kimlan, Tung Chun and Sinsin.

In a press statement, Roxas said he had asked the health department's Bureau of Food and Drugs to take tests on the level of 3-MCPD in the 22 products.

Pending the results of the BFAD tests, Roxas said it would be best for consumers to refrain from using these brands in their daily meals over an extended period.

The European Union has set the acceptable level of 3-MCPD in foodstuffs at 20 parts per billion.

The 3-MCPD substance may be released during the processing of a savoring ingredient known as hydrolyzed vegetable protein commonly used in food products the world over.

Such foodstuffs include soup stock, seasoning and soy, oyster and fish sauces.

The expert committee on additives of the Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Health Organization are expected to fix a standard tolerable daily intake of 3-MCPD later this year.

For the time being, Malaysia's health ministry said it was adopting the 3-MCPD standard on food products set by the European Union.

Malaysia's health ministry, however, clarified that Lee Kum Kee sauces made in Malaysia were safe, unlike those produced in Hong Kong by a different company.

Singapore also said Heinz Sinsin's oyster sauce produced in the island-state was free of the cancer-causing chemical and was suitable to eat.

Singapore's environment ministry said the latest sample test of Sinsin's oyster sauce showed it did not contain the flavoring ingredient 3-MCPD.

"We have removed the ingredient hydrolyzed vegetable protein, HVP, which contains 3-MCPD, from all our recipes since October 1999," said Heinz Sinsin managing director Tan Khieng Sin.

Tan said his company wrote to the Malaysian authorities Thursday to appeal the recall of Sinsin's oyster sauce there.

Pittsburgh-based H.J. Heinz Co. bought Singapore-based Sinsin Food Industries earlier this year. Besides oyster sauce, Heinz Sinsin makes soy sauce, chili sauce and other Asian condiments. ***With an AP report***

'Robot' also wanted in Germany

(From page A1)

sued by courts here for Andang, Susukan and other Abu Sayyaf commanders who led last year's hostage taking.

"Commander Robot has a case here. The priority is to arrest him. If he is arrested, he should be tried here first," presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said.

Andang and Susukan lead the Abu Sayyaf faction based in the Sulu town of Talipao, where the Wallerts and the other Caucasian foreigners were kept. The hostages were released in stages through September.

If the cousins are convicted here of the crime of kidnapping for ransom, they could be sentenced to death. Germany, however, does not have the death penalty.

The Philippines has extradition treaties with nine countries, but Germany is not one of them.

Tiglao said any agreement to have Andang tried in that country would have to be "worked out" between the two governments.

Armed Forces spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan echoed Tiglao's opinion, saying the Philippine government would probably prefer to get its hands on Andang first.

"I believe we would want to have Robot prosecuted and tried under our criminal justice system," Adan said, when asked to comment on the report.

Adan also noted that Andang has a P5-million bounty reward on his head.

On June 15, the government said there had been talks aimed at securing Robot's surrender. A day earlier, Andang released a message saying he was prepared to surrender with 17 of his men if they could be guaranteed a fair trial. ***With a report from AFP***

Racists in Australia not usually violent

(From page A1)

one from Asia with slit eyes is an "Asian"—which is a generic category.

Similarly, an average Filipino has no idea of knowing whether a Caucasian-like foreigner is English, French, Czech, Pole or Russian.

Most likely, the Filipino's first impression of a white man is that he is an American because the American is the white foreigner we know best.

Colors of rainbow

The Australian population is racially and ethnically mixed like the colors of a rainbow. It is a multicultural society.

For example, Australia has a wide range of restaurants with cuisine ranging from Italian, Chinese, Spanish, Greek, Turkish, Vietnamese and Japanese. Melbourne boasts of having among the best Italian restaurants in the world.

Australian white settlers, essentially from Irish stock, like to think they are different from other European settlers that came in waves—for example, the Germans, Italians, Croats, Greeks and Spaniards, not to mention South Africans and South Americans. Non-English migrants from Europe are called "wogs" but violence is not part of that expression.

Filipinos in Australia do not live in ethnic ghettoes. They are scattered and fairly widely distributed across ethnic communities, mainly in middle class or upper middle class suburbs.

They assimilate easily with other migrants or even with white Australians, although they are also given to splitting into many rival organizations.

Notable success

The Gonzales family lived in an upper middle class suburb in Sydney. The lawyer Gonzales is a notable success of Filipino penetration into professions where migrants have to overcome built-in handicaps blocking their access.

The handicaps are particularly high in medicine, law, accountancy and mainstream journalism. In medicine, for example, doctors from German universities cannot be licensed as doctors without taking Australian qualifying examinations.

Gonzales had an apparently successful legal practice in Sydney.

Among the ethnic communities, there exist degrees of violence, especially among "triads," but these are intra-community driven crimes.

Filipinos have also been subjected to violence, the most prevalent victims being the Filipino brides of Australians, who could be Italian migrants, as well as "white" Australians.

White Policy

Australian racism has toned down since the 1950s when the Australia "White Policy" was riding high. The Labor government of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam officially abolished the Australia White Policy in the 1970s, writing laws that dismantled discriminatory practices and providing equal opportunities for migrants.

Despite this, racism has remained not far below the surface, especially in workplaces.

The Labor Party, based on the organized working class, in a country where trade unions are powerful, has not exactly been free of racism.

The unions have considered Asian migrants as threats, stealing jobs from their members, but that perception is not founded on facts. Migrants take jobs that union members reject.

In the rural areas is based a political movement hostile to Asians. But this movement has no reason to be threatened by Asians. The migrants congregate in cities where they operate small shops and services.

But violence is not the creed of Australian discrimination that has mellowed over time.

More adaptable

Filipinos, among Asian migrants, are probably the least ethnically defined migrant group in Australia, and their ways are more Western and, hence, more adaptable to Australian lifestyle than other Asian groups.

They mingle easily in the crowd, shopping centers and public markets. I have found Filipinos in Australia quite relaxed and able to handle racial slurs without being hysterical in a country where the more overt forms of racism are on the wane.

This is not to discount that conspicuous success of migrants could cause resentment, but for resentment to translate into a horrible murder requires a more satisfactory explanation.

I would be inclined to wait for further results of the police investigation before giving weight to the racial theory, without rejecting it all together.

Filipino communities in Australia know their environment very well, allowing them to view this abominable crime with balance.

If evidence on racism is strong, then it should be time for Australia to be bothered about whether its policy of racial tolerance is in trouble.

Militants slam GMA 'apathy' on wage issue

(From page A1)

terday said she would "strive to prevent any increase in transport fares and take concrete moves to bring the prices of medicine down within the next 12 months."

The KMU said Ms Macapagal's continued silence on the wage increase issue meant that she was "deaf to the needs of workers" whose support she courted at the height of the campaign to oust then President Joseph Estrada.

"We're very disappointed with her. Our concerns are legitimate. Workers can hardly survive these days. She just needs to fulfill her promises."

The militant groups called on workers here and abroad to send hate letters to the President and Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas for allegedly siding with business groups in the issue of wage increase.

"This government, like its predecessor, maintains a policy that workers' wage and benefits must remain nailed to the basement floor so that it can attract foreign investors to the country," Malunes said.

Workers argue that businesses with a minimum capital of P10 million can easily afford a wage increase since labor cost and compensation amount to less than 10 percent of total cost of production.

Reacting to Sto. Tomas' complaint that she was "bombarded by hate mail" after the INQUIRER erroneously reported that she was supporting the P125-wage increase petition, Malunes said the labor chief should expect more of such letters.

Malúnes said he was encouraging KMU members and their allies to write Sto. Tomas and Malacañang and chide them for not championing the interests of workers.

"If she (Sto. Tomas) were a true advocate for the interests of Filipino workers, then she should have been flattered by the mail which, if there were actually any, most likely were sent by members of the business community," Malunes said.

The Employers Confederation of the Philippines (Ecop) and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) criticized Sto. Tomas after the INQUIRER report came out.

Sto. Tomas has denied making any statement supporting a P125 across-the-board wage increase. The INQUIRER based its story on a spurious press statement purportedly issued by the labor department.

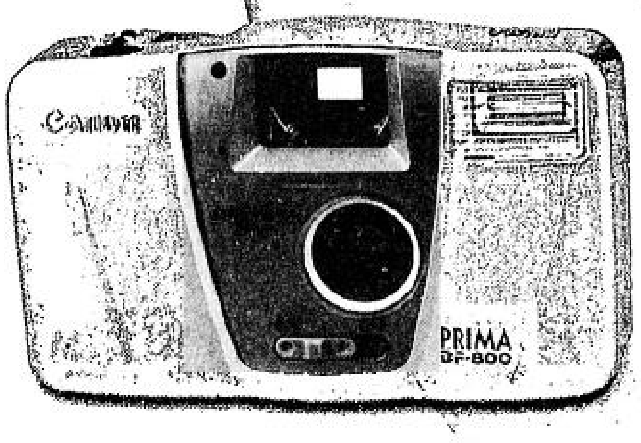
"But then again, the Ecop and the PCCI know that Sto. Tomas is their loyal ally in keeping the workers' wages down, so maybe it came from other quarters who are also against wage hikes, like multinational corporations," Malunes said.

He encouraged KMU members and allies "here and abroad," Catholic Church leaders and civil society groups to send letters to the labor secretary and let her read the anguish of workers regarding low salaries.

He said most medium-to-big businesses with at least P10 million in capital could absorb the wage increase.

He explained that the ratio of wages to total production cost in all industries had gone down from 11.1 percent to 10.6 percent over the last five years.

"Workers' compensation and wages comprise less than 10 percent of total production costs, so this means that a P125 across-the-board wage increase will not even increase production cost by 10 percent," Malunes said.



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Ari retains OPBF diadem

TIGER Ari retained his OPBF super featherweight crown after knocking out Kazunori Fujita of Japan in the first round yesterday in Osaka, Japan. It was Ari's fifth title defense. He is set to arrive home tomorrow.

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▨ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Schumacher guns for history

SILVERSTONE, England—Michael Schumacher is on the pole in Sunday's British Grand Prix looking for history. The 32-year-old German needs just one more win to tie Alain Prost's career Formula One record of 51 victories. And a checkered flag Sunday would virtually clinch Schumacher's fourth series championship with six races left. The records won't come easily. Two-time series champion Mika Hakkinen

Casas rallies to win CAP-Legends meet

CASAS: Big winner again. FILE PHOTO

CARMONA, Cavite—Cassius Casas rallied from two shots down in the last eight holes to win the CAP-Legends Classic yesterday at the Legends Course here.

In winning his second professional title in as many tournaments, Casas closed out with a 32 and a 69 to prevail and follow up his Philippine Open victory at Wack Wack two weeks ago.

He had a 274, 14-under, and won by four strokes, not over Mars Pucay, whom he shared the lead in the third round, nor over the rest of the fancied men of the tour. But Casas clinched the victory worth P100,000 over the resilient amateur Jerome Delariarte, who snatched second place as Pucay and company either lost in the face of Casas' fiery finish or simply faded away.

Casas, Pucay and Delariarte actually tied for the lead after No. 14 as the amateur, playing pressure-free in a flight ahead, banged in a birdie from six feet only to fall back by two with a three-putt bogey on the next.

Pucay, who seized a two-stroke lead over Casas with a 15-foot birdie on No. 10 only to throw it away with bogeys on the next two holes, squandered his title bid with a disastrous double-bogey on the par 3 16th when he pulled his 8-iron tee shot into the big pond at the leftside of the green. He had a 38 and a 74 for 279.

He was even bumped off the runner-up honors by Delariarte, whose gutsy 69 spoke well of the caliber of perhaps the next amateur player to watch as the 22-year-old find finished a shot better with 278, spiked by a tournament-best 65 in the first round which Pucay matched a day after.

But Pucay failed to match Casas' superb finish, although he shared the combined prize money for second and third with Dan Cruz, whose 70 enabled him to tie Pucay at 9-under. They each won P42,000.

But it took Casas a spectacular, if improbable birdie putt from 45 feet to erase the stigma of a horrid four-putt double-bogey on the par 3 No.7 and set up his great finish.

"When I birdied No. 15 from way out, I was already sure of my victory," said Casas in Filipino, referring to his curling putt that gave him a one-shot lead over Pucay.

But he didn't stop there.

Already up by two over Delariarte and three over Pucay, Casas rolled in another putt form 30 feet for eagle on the par 5 17th before capping his romp with a gimme from a superb wedge shot from around 130 yards.

Elmer Salvador, the third player in the championship flight, turned himself into a virtual gallery in the Casas-Pucay duel as he never put himself in contention although the Epson Classic winner salvaged a round of 73 and a 281 for fourth worth P25,000.

Benjie Magada matched par 72-282 for fifth worth P20,000 followed by Rodrigo Cuello (74-283-P17,050), Danny Zarate (70-283-P17,050), Robert Pactolerin, (70-284-P15,800) and Vic Santia (75-285-P15,300) in that order, Armando Eso (67), Edwin Estrera (66) Gerald Rosales (71) and Carito Villaroman (69) tied for 10th with 286s and won P14,050 each.

Final scores:

274—Casas, F. (71-68-66-69) (37-32)
278—Delariarte, J. (am) (65-69-74-70) (36-34)
279—Pucay, M. (73-65-67-74) (36-38)
—Cruz, D. (72-68-69-70) (36-34)
281—Salvador, E. (69-69-70-73) (39-34)
281—Magada, B. (72—67-71-72) (35-37)
283—Cuello, R. (73-67-69-74) (36-38)
—Zarate, D. (71-70-72-70) (35-35)
284—Pactolerin, R. (73-69-72-70) (37-33)
285—Santia, V. (73-70-67-75) (38-39)

Davao hosting Rotary fellowship tourney

THE POPULAR Rotary Golf Fellowship Tournament, organized annually by the Rotary Golfing Fellowship Foundation of the Philippines, will hold its 15th RGFFP Golf Southern Leg Tournament in Davao City on Sept. 19-23.

Venues for the 36-hole event are the Apo View Golf & Country Club and the newest world class golf club which is the Palos Verdes Golf & Country Club.

Tournament committee chair, PP Nonoy Braga, and RGFFP chair, PDG Oscar de Venecia, said they expect a total of 300-400 Rotarian golfers to participate in the tourney.

The competition is open to teams representing Rotary clubs. Team members must be Rotarians in good standing. There will also be an individual competition in four categories.

Discussion with top Rotarians in Visayas and Mindanao notably PDG Tony Garcia, PDG Anton Florendo, PDG AL Manus and PP Sonny Garcia have been completed.

Defending champion is RC East Rizal and Rtn. Jungki Flores of RC Cebu South.

For inquiries, contact the following: Ditas Serapio/Theresa Romero, tel. 7210564, Fax no. 7215940; Rtn. Albert Que (for district 3310), tel. 8313201; PP Sonny Garcia (for Southern entries), tel. (082)2242497 and PDG Anton Florendo (for Cebu Rotarians), tel. (032)2535720.

Bata, 2 other Pinoy pool bets sparkle

REYES

EFREN "Bata" Reyes, Leonardo "Dodong" Andam and Francisco "Django" Bustamante launched their bids on a high note to make up for the setbacks of two other Filipino bets Saturday in the 2001 World Pool Championship at the Cardiff International Arena in Cardiff, Wales.

Reyes and Andam posted two smashing wins, while Bustamante scored on opening day of the first-round group play to make up for the defeats of countrymen Rodolfo "Boy" Samson Luat and Warren Kiamco.

Reyes, whose victory in this meet two years ago made him one of the most popular and well-loved athletes in the country, rallied to nip Japan's Hisashi Yamamoto, 5-4, then followed it up with a 5-0 whipping of Wales' Rob McKenna and take the solo lead in Group 8 with four points.

Andam, a veteran of the US pro tour like Reyes, crushed Namibia's Arnold van Staden, 5-0, and Canada's Paul Potier, 5-3, to register four points and share the Group 16 lead.

Bustamante downed American Troy Frank, 5-2, to gain a share of second place in Group 13.

Meanwhile, Antonio Lining, who beat Reyes in a Manila tournament two years ago, and Ramil "Bebeng" Gallego both went 1-of-2 at the start of hostilities in Group 14, and 1, respectively.

Lining beat Australia's Warren Kings, 5-2, but lost to Germany's Thomas Engert, 1-5, to settle for two points and a share of second spot in Group 14. Gallego defeated Sweden's Tom Storm, 5-1, but lost to England's Chris Melling, 4-5, to score two points.

Luat bowed to Finland's Mika "The Iceman" Immonen, 1-5. It was followed by another setback to unknown Indonesian Alwi, 1-5, in his second rematch in Group 6.

Kiamco also failed to notch a win in his debut. He bowed to 2000 World Pool Masters champion Alex Lely of Holland, 1-5, and to Alain Martel of Canada, 4-5.

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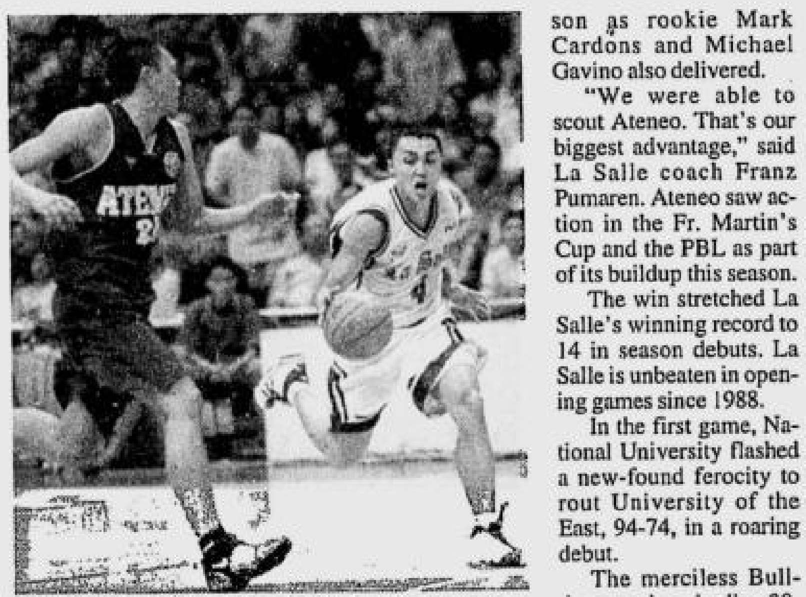
Archers shame Eagles

By Dennis Eroa



RITUALO (right) slips past Ramon Bugia of Ateneo. ROMY HOMILLADA

DE La Salle reasserted its supremacy over bitter rival Ateneo, hacking out a murderous 91-76 triumph last night in the UAAP Men's Basketball Championships at the Araneta Coliseum.

Showing no mercy, the sleek-playing Green Archers controlled the game right from the opening tipoff.

Blunting the Blue Eagles' repeated rallies with their superior ball movements which led to excellent shot selections, the Green Archers raced to a 85-68 bubble before coasting to victory.

Living up to his billing as the country's top amateur dribbler, Ren Ren Ritualo mocked Ateneo's defense as he scattered 33 points on top of four rebounds, three assists and three steals, a performance which had the crowd cheering in delight.

Ritualo's support group also hit its target. Willie Wilson, Manny Ramos, Mike Vainio and pointguard Mike Cortes had their own share of the spotlight, even as the massive green-and-white gallery roared in unison as rookie Mark Cardona and Michael Gavino also delivered.

"We were able to scout Ateneo. That's our biggest advantage," said La Salle coach Franz Pumaren. Ateneo saw action in the Fr. Martin's Cup and the PBL as part of its buildup this season.

The win stretched La Salle's winning record to 14 in season debuts. La Salle is unbeaten in opening games since 1988.

In the first game, National University flashed a new-found ferocity to rout University of the East, 94-74, in a roaring debut.

The merciless Bulldogs used a crippling 20-0 bomb in the third period to pull away from the erratic Red Warriors.

Scores:

LA SALLE 91—Ritualo 33, Cardona 13, Cortez 12, Wilson 10, Gavino 8, Sta. Maria 5, Ramos 4, Arejola 4, Vainio 2, Gozum 0.

ATENEO 76—Alvarez 17, Villanueva 12, Tenorio 11, Fonacier 10, Sison 9, Cruz 5, Membrere 4, Tan Chi 4, Bugia 3, Elmido 1, Quimpo 0.

Quarters: 23-20, 47-41, 70-57, 91-76

Lendl inducted to 'Hall'

NEWPORT, Rhode Island—Ivan Lendl remembers hanging around the tennis club in his hometown hoping that other players wouldn't show up.

That way, he could squeeze in more than his allotted one hour of practice time at the only tennis facility in Ostrava, the industrial town where he grew up in Czechoslovakia.

He recalled those extra hours and the pushing from his mother - who also played professional tennis - at his induction Saturday into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

Mervyn Rose, an Australian star from the 1950s who has devoted much of his post-playing career to coaching his country's Davis Cup team, also was enshrined.

Lendl's reign as one of the predominant players of his time—he was ranked No. 1 for 157 consecutive weeks in the 1980s. *AP*

RALLY SERIES

Carlo Gutang, with navigator Choy Mabunay driving their Toyota Celica, finished second overall during the 2nd leg of Petron Blaze Rally Series held recently inside the Naval Mag of Subic Bay. Gutang and Mabuhay posted a time of 39.31.

Camacho decisions Duran

DENVER—It wasn't so much a fight for the ages as of the ages.

In a bout that seemed to feature as much clutching as punching Hector Camacho used a steady mix of right jabs to set up his left hook in a unanimous 12-round decision over 50-year-old Roberto Duran on Saturday night.

The 39-year-old Camacho received winning scores of 114-112, 118-108 and 118-108 to improve to 75-4. He captured the fringe National Boxing Association title Duran carried into the ring.

"I was fighting a great legend," Camacho said. "I'm very proud to beat him and I'm very proud of him. I admire him. He wasn't easy to hit."

The fight, billed as "When Legends Collide," could be the last for Duran, the Panamanian known for his "Hands of Stone." Since 1967, he has fought at least once every year except 1985, and his 104-16 record spans five decades. *AP*

Chambers sparks Aces past Pals

By Marc Anthony Reyes

VETERAN Sean Chambers sparked Alaska Milk's devastating 101-67 rout over Mobiline last night as the Aces got out of the rut in the PBA Commissioner's Cup at the Ynares Center.

The 35-year-old import, recalled to replace younger but ineffective Terrance Badgett, provided inspiration for the Aces, who snapped a four-game losing run for a 5-4 tally aside from firming their claim for the twice-to-beat incentive.

He may have been slowed down by time but Chambers was still impeccable, making his teammates look good with his pinpoint assists as he brought back the luster in the Aces' hallmark triangle offense.

He finished with 15 points and five rebounds on top of encouraging lethargic Ali Peek, Kenneth Duremdes and Jon Ordonio.

"I guess, everybody just had his wake-up call," said Alaska coach Tim Cone. "It feels good to be back in winning form and I hope we learned our lessons from our 0-4 experience."

The Aces surely did as they displayed unrelenting drive to demolish the Phone Pals, posting the biggest advantage of 42 points (71-29) midway in the third quarter.

The Phone Pals dropped to 3-5 and are in danger of missing the bus to the quarterfinals. They will tackle Sta. Lucia for their final assignment.

In the second game, Tremaine Wingfield scored 25 points to carry Shell to an 85-72 victory over Barangay Ginebra and keep the Turbochargers' quarterfinal chances alive. Shell improved to 3-6, while Ginebra dropped to 4-5.

ALASKA 101—Peek 18, Duremdes 16, Chambers 15, Allado 10, Santos 8, Ordonio 8, Evans 8, Arigo 7, Wallkvist 4, Ticzon 4, Reyes 3.

MOBILINE 67—Bernard 30, Taulava 14, Pablo 6, Ravena 5, Camaso 4, Fran 3, Demape 3, Ejercito 2, Cui 0, Codiñera 0, Babilonia 0.

Quarters: 30-8, 59-25, 76-44, 101-67.

Slashers, Blades rip rivals

By Roy Luarca

Games Tomorrow
Araullo Gym (Cabanatuan City)
3:00 p.m.—Socsargen vs Cebu
5:30 p.m.—Laguna vs Nueva Ecija

LIPA CITY—The LBC Batangas Blades took out the Cebu Gems' dreaded low post plays and went on to prevail, 83-69, last night in the Metropolitan Basketball Association First Phase at the packed De La Salle Lipa Sentrum here.

Getting the lift from Jeffrey Sanders, the Blades recovered from a sluggish first quarter and were never headed en route to their sixth win in eight starts that put them on even footing with first game winner Negros Slashers (9-3).

The reedy Sanders, given more time to shine due to the unavailability of Stephen Antonio, who was rested due to back spasms, scored a game-high 19 points on top of 10 rebounds for his breakout performance this season.

Fittingly, Sanders explosion came on the Blades' first home game and against the Gems who have beaten them (96-90) in their first meeting in Cebu City.

With Matthew Mitchell and Homer Se neutralized inside the paint and gunners Stephen Padilla and Peter Naron unable to find their range, the Gems trailed by as many as 15 points on the way to their fourth loss in 11 games.

The Slashers found the Nueva Ecija Patriots tougher customers the second time around.

Scrounging for points in the last three minutes, the Slashers weathered the Patriots' final rally before tallying a 96-88 victory at the University of St. La Salle Gym in Bacolod City.

NEGROS 96—Ferriols 21, Cardel 20, Madrid 9, Bat-og 8, Huelat 8, Dela Rosa 7, White 7, Huganatan 6, Igancio 4, Tierra 4, Aldeguer 2, Primero 0.

N. ECIJA 88—Aquino 22, A. de Guzman 12, Bansil 11, Bautista 9, Makalintal 8, De Gula 7, J. de Guzman 6, Allen 6, Manucat 5, Bunyi 2, Punzalan 0.

Quarters; 25-18, 47-44, 70-65, 96-88.

Athletic courses fire off July 23

THE NATIONAL Athletic Training and Fitness Academy (Natfa), in cooperation with TEAM F.I.T.ness International, is inviting current and aspiring athletic trainers, coaches, PE teachers, physical therapists, gym/aerobics instrucotrs and sports and fitness professionals to attend its Batch 2 Athletic Training and Fitness Certification Courses starting on July 23.

A pioneering endeavor in the field of scientific sports, Natfa has attracted more than 100 participants in its initial courses.

Headed by Prof. Jimbo Saret(M.S. Athletic Training, Brigham Young University), Natfa is composed of an elite group of internationally trained sports science professors, sports medicine doctors and fitness specialists from the United Staes, Australia and Germany.

The courses offered in modular form include subjects in athletic training, anatomy, biomechanics, exercise physiology, program design, scientific conditioning principles, testing and evaluation of athletes, scientific strength training techniques and execution, sports nutrition, injury prevention, athletic taping, sports first aid CPR, injury evaluation, sports rehabilitation and many more.

For inquiries and registration, please call Natfa at 921-7224. Fax: 924-1984. E-mail: natfa @yahoo.com. Limited slots per class so register early.

Pasay 5-cock tilt starts Thursday

PASAY City Cockpit's 14th Anniversary 5-Cock Derby blasts off on Thursday, July 19, starting at exactly 10 a.m. The finals is on Saturday, July 21.

As of yesterday, 114 participants have already confirmed their participation. PCC pit managers Oscar Gonzales, Eric dela Rosa and Butchoy Olano said the total number of entries may reach to 150 due to the expected influx of walk -in participants.

The submission of weights is strictly one day before derby (Wednesday, July 18, from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.). Interested parties may contact 8166750, 843-1890 and 843-1746.

At stake is P1 million while entry fee is P15,000. The champion handler and gaffer gets P100,000 and P50,000 respectively.

Among those who registered yesterday were Erwin Diamante, Madison Go, Boy Luz, Peter Ortiz, Boy Gloria, Maj. Bobby Doromal, Rep. Andaya, Al Borbajo, Jun Manguerra, Romy Rondon, Alan Tan, Jobo del Rosario, Joe Banate, Boy Aplasca, Jolly Que, Bimbo Zulueta, James Chua, Rudy Oris and Pepito Ngo.

Espiritu Cup

Games tomorrow:
4 p.m.—Hub Net Café vs Wang's
5:30 p.m.—Mighty Corp. vs PMI

SPICELAND Corp. has agreed to co-sponsor the ongoing 3rd NBC Danny Espiritu Cup basketball tournament, which resumes tomorrow with a doubleheader at the Makati Coliseum.

Spiceland executive Dennis Ng, who is set to launch Spiceland Iodized Salt (Pisong asin, iodized pa), say he believes in the vision of the country's leading sports talent manager, Danny Espiritu, "in giving promising youngsters the opportunity to break into the big leagues" by staging the cagefest.

Defending champion Montana Jewels and Metro Manila Colleges, led by EVP Evelynned M. Dominguez, athletic director Rosanna Herrera and coach Florian "Bong " Pineda, are also vying in the tourney sponsored by Spring Margarine, Tanduay Rhum and Wild Duck Restaurant and supported by Milo.

NCAA games today

(Rizal Memorial Coliseum)
12nn—San Sebastian College vs Mapua (jrs/srs)
3 p.m.—Jose Rizal University vs UPHR (jrs/srs)

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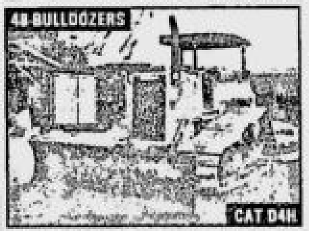

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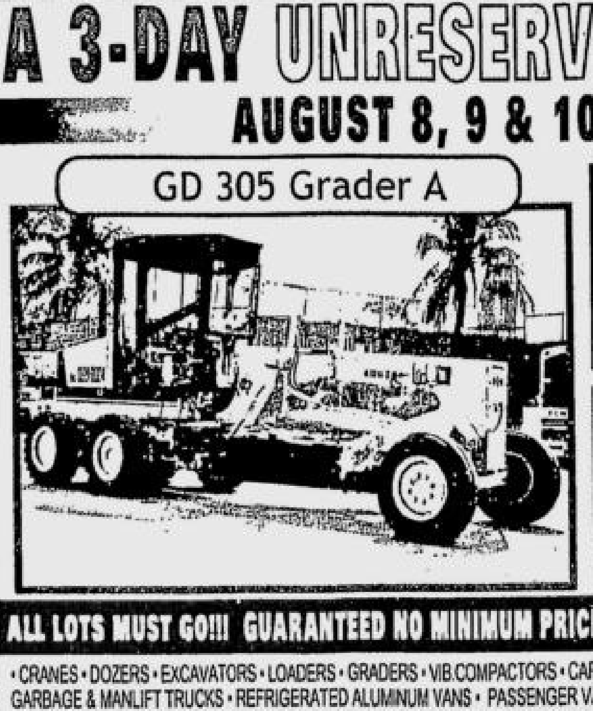

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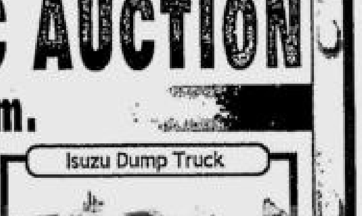

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KAMERAWORLD IGNITES DIGITAL PHOTO IMAGING REVOLUTION

July 16- Kameraworld, Inc., the country's largest photo chain, marks a first in the local photo imaging industry with the launching today of full digital services, beginning with its Greenbelt store in Makati.

According to Enic L. Gueco, vice president and chief operating officer, the digital services puts the country in the global digital community where consumers may purchase a variety of digital cameras and choose from a wide spectrum of digital photo processing applications not available in traditional photo outlets.

Kameraworld's leap into the digital market signifies its readiness to offer the sophistication and convenience that digital cameras and photo applications are capable of delivering to consumers. Among the digital photo services it offers are: image restoration and manipulation, a wide choice of photo invitations and special occasion greeting cards, photo- quality posters, T-shirts, index prints and picture CD's among others.

"Our digital services create an entirely new photographic landscape for the consumer whose picture- taking needs have grown by leaps and bounds," Gueco said. He cited Kameraworld's capability to restore old black and white pictures and having them converted into full colors of enlargements. Backgrounds may also be changed and other enhancements introduced into the consumer's picture.

Forming part of Kameraworld's digital thrust is the package of digital services from its Faces studio. Situated within the store, the studio offers professional services at affordable prices.. Its services include: ID and passport photos and a variety of package poses that bring a different dimension in consumer photography. Coming under such choices as Mona Lisa, Rembrandt, My Baby, My Fantasy, My Group and Vogue, the package poses give consumers an entirely new choice in having their pictures taken.

Kameraworld's digital services will also be available at SM MegaMall, SM North Edsa, Festival SuperMall and Alabang Town Center within the month of July. Its store in Cebu is scheduled to offer digital services in August. The plan, according to Gueco, is to have all Kameraworld stores converted into digital by 2002.

Mr. Enic L. Gueco, Chief Operating Officer & VP of Kameraworld, Inc.

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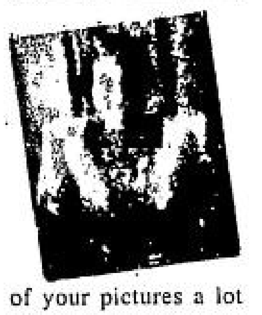
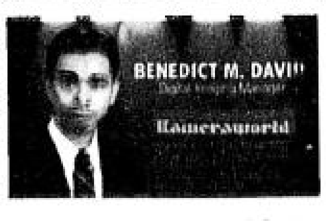


The photo imaging technology in the Philippines has come a very long way. From whence pictures were taken using your great great grandfather's camera, then in a manner where gun-powder flashes cloud and smoke the pictorial scene, to now, a time where various possibilities in picture taking, developing and processing are made more available and enjoyable as ever, we stand witness to the evolution of the photo imaging industry that paved the way for the development of cutting-edge photo imaging products and services that offer and open greater possibilities to the consumer.

Kameraworld takes the lead in making the realm of digital photo imaging ever more understandable, accessible and affordable to the Filipino consumer.

Apart from being digitally equipped with the state-of-the-art QSS 2701 in developing photographs, digital technology is made available over the counter via applications that revolutionize what we've always known about pictures and imaging procedures. These wonders are packaged for choice by any walk-in customer through Kameraworld's FACES ® Digital Studio and IMAGIK ® digital services. Just bring to any Kameraworld Digital store your image sources in any of the following formats: photo prints, negatives, floppy and zip disks, CDRs and memory cards.

Most basic and first on the list of digital services is the ability to **Eliminate Red-Eye** from your pictures. Gone now are days when one's picture appears with imposing red spots in the eyes which can mistake you for an alien or zombie. **Photo Restoration, Colorization & Image Manipulation** will give your old pictures that fresh new look by digitally enhancing and/or adjusting the color, level, hue and saturation of the same, thereby allowing fresh tones to replace faded ones, not to mention that creases, folds; scratches or tears can now be digitally restored. But for those who love that nostalgic and classic look, the process can be reversed to make your new pictures look old either in black and white or sepia. **No negatives, no problem!** Also available are fun and exciting ways to duplicate pictures from the original photo, this, in case you've misplaced or probably lost the negative.



Numerous templates are also available in ways that will make duplication of your pictures a lot more fun either for your personal, professional and/or business applications (e.g. invitations, posters, business cards, backlit signages). **Compositing** is a digitally manipulated procedure where one's picture or simply an object is "grabbed" or lifted from its original background and pasted on a new background, without the slightest trace. Be in Paris, Rome or the Caribbean!

Retouching allows digitally enhanced manipulation of your pictures ala make-up. Get rid of that eye-bag, pimple or even that wrinkle. Redder lips, blue eyes, get tanned or be as fair. **Go Large please!** Now imagine your most beautiful picture in your most stunning pose hung on the wall of your bedroom, living room, office, and yes, even your shirt! Kameraworld now offers the crisp and vividly enlarged formats of your picture in more ways than you could imagine. Turn your pictures or any image you like into canvas, vinyl glossy and matte textured posters or stickers depending on your taste and mood. Sizes of up to 20 x 30 inches or even larger with less or no grain at all! And aside from the traditional The Organizer ® photo album to organize and store your photo prints, you can get your digital pictures **Organized and Stored for Life** in Picture CD Albums made available at every Kameraworld Digital store.

A series of launches will enable the public and the loyal patrons of Kameraworld experience these fun and exciting products and services on August 15 – 19, 2001. Watch out for further announcements.

KAMERAWORLD DIGITAL- *the inside story*

Kameraworld, Inc. is a 100% Filipino corporation owned and operated by Atty. Pacifico M. Castro. Its main office is located on the 8th Floor of the Philippine Stock Exchange building along Tektite Ave. within the Ortigas Commercial Center in Pasig City.

It started operations in 1974 when it assumed the retail operations of Kodak Philippines, Ltd. in Makati and Escolta. Kodak gave up its retail outlets following the termination of the Laurel-Langley agreement which gave special priveleges to foreign corporations, especially with respect to retail operations.

Kameraworld's operations quickly received a boost with the opening of another store at the corner of Katipunan and Santolan road in Quezon City.

On its second year of operation, Kameraworld opened, two more branches: one at Malate's commercial center, the Harrison Plaza; and the other along Pasay Road in Makati.

On November of the the same year, Kodak Philippines, Ltd. appointed Kameraworld as a distributor of Kodak audiovisual equipment and services. This led to the creation of an AV Representative Group in Kameraworld stores to specialize in the marketing of audiovisual products.

Kameraworld's growth through the years is a tribute to the vision and business acumen of its founders who believed in the capacity of the Filipino to make good in business and excel in the photo imaging industry.

Now 27 years in operation, Kameraworld is considered as the largest photo imaging chain in the country with 90 branches throughout the country. Its thrust toward digital photo imaging marks a first in the country and is expected to see the gradual conversion of the industry into one of the "sunrise" industries in the Philippine business circuit.

PHOTO INDUSTRY LEADERS SUPPORT NEW KAMERAWORLD THRUST

The Kameraworld-KODAK partnership dates back from Kameraworld's inception in 1974. The vision of delivering quality products and services as made possible by advances in technology is shared between these two companies. As a worldwide brand, KODAK has earned its customers' trust world-over by consistently providing them with products that truly measure value-for-money.

Kameraworld endeavors and guides itself with the same business principle. Not to mention that Kameraworld uses quality KODAK paper for its photo prints.

"Kameraworld has been one of the leaders in the photo retailing industry and through the years, has continuously served the photographic needs of the consumers. The launch of the Kameraworld Digital will further strengthen their leadership through their enhanced capability to offer digital photography solutions", says Mr. Antonio A. Cinco, General Manager of KODAK Philippines, Ltd.

All Kameraworld Digital stores boast of Noritsu's QSS 2701 which digitally controls information, operation and logic in the photo print development services of Kameraworld. This digital wonder will allow Kameraworld to accept and process both the traditional and digital formats all in one machine. This also means that templated designs like borders, frames, calendars, business cards and images as large as 12 x 18 inches can be processed directly into it. This reinforces Kameraworld's longtime philosophy and paradigm in delivering only the best to its customers. "Walang patsamba-tsamba" (we don't take chances) is now, more than ever, ensured.

Kameraworld thanks Noritsu Philippines for the technical and training support.

Mr. Kiyotaka Tanaka, President of Noritsu Philippines—"It is with great pleasure that I extend my warmest congratulations to Kameraworld as it ventures into the Digital Age. The launching of KAMERAWORLD DIGITAL strengthens the role that advanced photo imaging technologies play in a country's pursuit to be globally competitive."

Kameraworld
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■ Barricades vs ROTC A26

METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

■ Gordon tries color-coding for Metro taxis A27

Engineer, architect die in DPWH fire

By Christian V. Esguerra

AN ENGINEER and an architect of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) died in a fire that struck a DPWH building in Manila early yesterday morning.

Chief Insp. Fennimore Jaudian, chief of the Manila Fire-Arson Department, identified the victims as engineer Leo Dacana, aged between 30 and 35 years old, and architect Marion Monge, about 40 to 45 years old.

Both men were burned beyond recognition in the brief fire that razed the Rural Infrastructure Fund building at the DPWH Motorpool Compound on Chicago Street, Port Area, Manila at 2:15 a.m. yesterday, authorities said.

Fire investigators have yet to determine what caused the fire that destroyed about P600,000 worth of office items and equipment in the old DPWH building.

ENGINEER/A26

THE burnt body of one of the victims is recovered, at the DPWH motor pool compound in Port Area, Manila. JESS YUSON

Wazzzzup?

8th day BAR • CAFE ST. FRANCIS SQ. ORTIGAS CTR.	M POWER (JULY 16, MONDAY)	FREESTYLE JULY 17/634.7696
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Cowboy GRILL 1190 ARQUEZA ST., MABINI	MUSIC CIRCUIT FAT 16/ARTENSION	NO ENTRANCE FEE 525.1474/525.4269
Cowboy GRILL 411 REMEDIOS ST., MALATE	MR. ROXY HERZ	NO ENTRANCE FEE ☎521.8143
Cowboy GRILL NOVALICHES Q.C.	KNIGHTS J BROTHERS	NO ENTRANCE FEE ☎936.9757
DOWNTOWN Music Bar & Restaurant	PORK CHOP DUO SHARMAINE SANTIAGO	P 250 CONSUMABLE ☎373.3333
KAMPO 2088 #47 WEST AVENUE Q.C.	GROOVE L.O.C/MUZIK JIVE	P 200 CONSUMABLE 373.5110/373.7181
EXAMINER'S LITE n'LIVE #52 EXAMINER ST., Q.C.	NXT LEVEL	P 150 CONSUMABLE 373.2221/373.7183
music WAREHOUSE INFRONT OF CENTRAL MARKET	M SERIES KOOL JACKS	FREE ENTRANCE 735.1280/735.1405
PADIS MINDAVE MINDANAO AVE. COR. CONG'L, Q.C.	FREEVERSE BARBIE'S CRADLE/JULY 24	LADIESNITE 453.0080/414.4930-34
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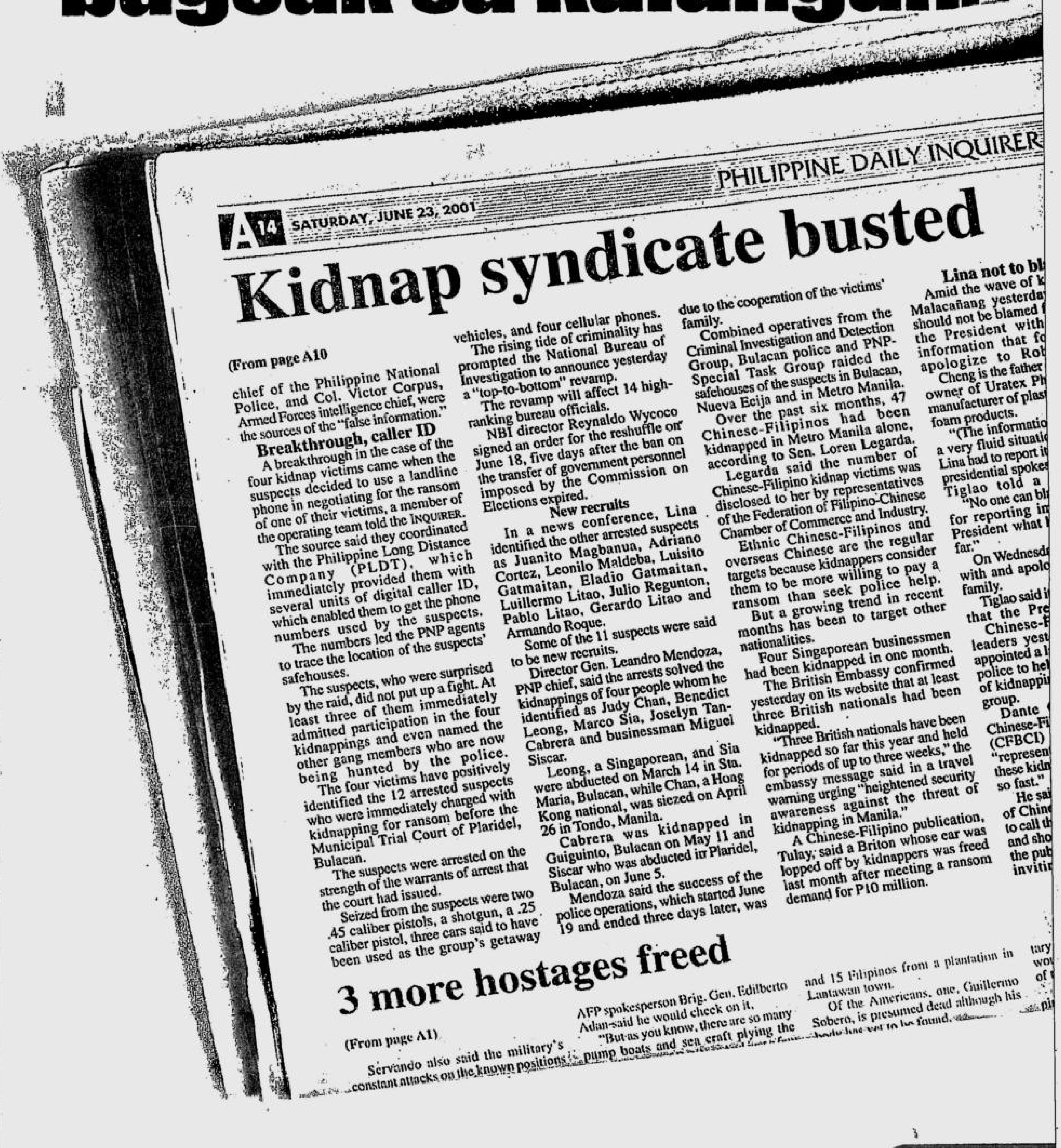


PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

A14 SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 2001

Kidnap syndicate busted

(From page A10

chief of the Philippine National Police, and Col. Victor Corpus, Armed Forces intelligence chief, were the sources of the "false information."

Breakthrough, caller ID

A breakthrough in the case of the four kidnap victims came when the suspects decided to use a landline phone in negotiating for the ransom of one of their victims, a member of the operating team told the INQUIRER.

The source said they coordinated with the Philippine Long Distance Company (PLDT), which immediately provided them with several units of digital caller ID, which enabled them to get the phone numbers used by the suspects.

The numbers led the PNP agents to trace the location of the suspects' safehouses.

The suspects, who were surprised by the raid, did not put up a fight. At least three of them immediately admitted participation in the four kidnappings and even named the other gang members who are now being hunted by the police.

The four victims have positively identified the 12 arrested suspects who were immediately charged with kidnapping for ransom before the Municipal Trial Court of Plaridel, Bulacan.

The suspects were arrested on the strength of the warrants of arrest that the court had issued.

Seized from the suspects were two .45 caliber pistols, a shotgun, a .25 caliber pistol, three cars said to have been used as the group's getaway vehicles, and four cellular phones.

The rising tide of criminality has prompted the National Bureau of Investigation to announce yesterday a "top-to-bottom" revamp.

The revamp will affect 14 high-ranking bureau officials.

NBI director Reynaldo Wycoco signed an order for the reshuffle on June 18, five days after the ban on the transfer of government personnel imposed by the Commission on Elections expired.

New recruits

In a news conference, Lina identified the other arrested suspects as Juanito Magbanua, Adriano Cortez, Leonilo Maldeba, Luisito Gatmaitan, Eladio Gatmaitan, Luillermo Litao, Julio Regunton, Pablo Litao, Gerardo Litao and Armando Roque.

Some of the 11 suspects were said to be new recruits.

Director Gen. Leandro Mendoza, PNP chief, said the arrests solved the kidnappings of four people whom he identified as Judy Chan, Benedict Leong, Marco Sia, Joselyn Tan-Cabrera and businessman Miguel Siscar.

Leong, a Singaporean, and Sia were abducted on March 14 in Sta. Maria, Bulacan, while Chan, a Hong Kong national, was siezed on April 26 in Tondo, Manila.

Cabrera was kidnapped in Guiguinto, Bulacan on May 11 and Siscar who was abducted in Plaridel, Bulacan, on June 5.

Mendoza said the success of the police operations, which started June 19 and ended three days later, was due to the cooperation of the victims' family.

Combined operatives from the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, Bulacan police and PNP-Special Task Group raided the safehouses of the suspects in Bulacan, Nueva Ecija and in Metro Manila.

Over the past six months, 47 Chinese-Filipinos had been kidnapped in Metro Manila alone, according to Sen. Loren Legarda.

Legarda said the number of Chinese-Filipino kidnap victims was disclosed to her by representatives of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Ethnic Chinese-Filipinos and overseas Chinese are the regular targets because kidnappers consider them to be more willing to pay a ransom than seek police help.

But a growing trend in recent months has been to target other nationalities.

Four Singaporean businessmen had been kidnapped in one month.

The British Embassy confirmed yesterday on its website that at least three British nationals had been kidnapped.

"Three British nationals have been kidnapped so far this year and held for periods of up to three weeks," the embassy message said in a travel warning urging "heightened security awareness against the threat of kidnapping in Manila."

A Chinese-Filipino publication, Tulay, said a Briton whose car was lopped off by kidnappers was freed last month after meeting a ransom demand for P10 million.

Lina not to bl

Amid the wave of k Malacañang yesterday should not be blamed f the President with information that fo apologize to Rob

Cheng is the father owner of Uratex Ph manufacturer of plast foam products.

"(The informatio a very fluid situatio Lina had to report it presidential spokes Tiglao told a

"No one can bl for reporting in President what far."

On Wednesd with and apolo family.

Tiglao said i that the Pre Chinese-F leaders yest appointed a l police to hel of kidnappi group.

Dante Chinese-Fi (CFBCI) "represen these kidn so fast."

He sai of Chine to call th and sho the pub invitin

3 more hostages freed

(From page A1)

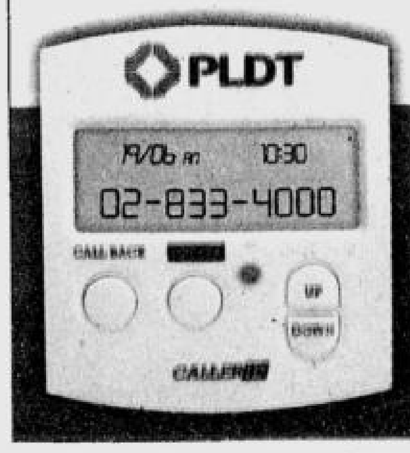
Servando also said the military's constant attacks on the known positions

AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan said he would check on it.

"But as you know, there are so many pump boats and sea craft plying the

and 15 Filipinos from a plantation in Lantawan town.

Of the Americans, one, Guillermo Sobero, is presumed dead although his



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Man tries to extort money in exchange for ROTC exemption

By Agnes E. Donato

PASIG police on Friday arrested a jobless man who allegedly tried to extort money from three students by promising them exemption from the ROTC.

Lauro Dulawan, 21, of Bataan Street, Manila, was accused of extorting P750 each from Lemor Patulot, 17; Joseph Magistrado, 17; and Rodivir Magana, 21, all students of Rizal Technological University in Mandaluyong City, police said.

The three students reported to police that Dulawan had approached them and asked them to pay P750 each in exchange for their exemption from the ROTC, said case investigator PO1 Norman Barcellano.

Police then set an entrapment operation and told the students to arrange a meeting with Dulawan at a fast food outlet at the Rotonda in Barangay Caniogan in Pasig about 2:30 p.m. Friday.

Police found on Dulawan P1,260, which was allegedly part of the money given by the three students.

Insp. Antonio Arcigal said the follow-up division of the Pasig police was still determining if Dulawan had a connection inside the school, noting that the suspect was jobless.

Dulawan refused to cooperate in the investigation and told police that he would only talk to authorities when his lawyer arrives.

As of yesterday, Dulawan was still without a lawyer, police said.

Barricades vs ROTC

By Christian V. Esguerra and Joey A. Gabieta,
PDI Visayas Bureau

THOUSANDS of Reserve Officers Training Corps cadets yesterday held simultaneous protest actions and again succeeded in paralyzing ROTC classes in Metro Manila universities.

Last week, heightened security measures in schools foiled the mass walkout of ROTC cadets.

Yesterday, about 7,000 cadets boycotted their classes and formed human barricades very early in the morning at the gates of the University of the East-Caloocan, Adamson University, Arellano University, and the Technological University of the Philippines. ROTC classes usually start at 7 a.m.

School officials were caught by surprise as hundreds of cadets began forming human barricades at the school gates as early as 4:30 a.m.

"This is our new strategy, our answer to the strict security measures applied by schools last week. The strategy paid off since majority of ROTC classes in Metro Manila were paralyzed," said Raymond Maglanoc, chair of Anakbayan-National Capital Region.

At the Far Eastern University, about 500 cadets picketed, but security guards and village watchers managed to drive them away, Maglanoc added.

"Still, we managed to partially paralyze classes."

At UE-Caloocan, hundreds of protesters set up a human blockade about 6:30 a.m. at the campus gate to prevent other cadets from joining the training. A handful of cadets managed to enter the campus but the majority opted to join the boycott.

A few hours later, protesters had already occupied a long stretch of Samson Road in front of UE, causing traffic jam, said James Cabangbang, spokesperson of the July 3 Movement, which is calling for the ROTC's immediate abolition.

Tension gripped the area when members of the UE ROTC military police and security guards allegedly slammed the gates on reporters and cameramen who tried to get footage of the training on campus, Cabangbang said.

Yesterday's boycott was the fourth in the series of mass actions dubbed "Sunday habit" to push for the abolition of the allegedly corrupt and irrelevant student military training program.

The brutal murder of Mark Welson Chua, a cadet officer of the University of Santo Tomas, after he exposed the alleged massive anomalies in his school's ROTC program, triggered the mass actions.

Chua was found dead and floating in the Pasig River last March. His body was wrapped in a carpet, and his face was bound with packing tape. Chua's hands and feet were also bound.

Chua's revelations led to the relief of UST commandant Army Maj. Demy Tejares and his staff members.

Cadets yesterday bared a series of protest activities leading to a massive rally that would greet President Macapagal-Arroyo when she delivers her state of the nation address on July 23.

On top of wearing black ribbons starting this week, protesters will organize a "genuine" Alay-Lakad program on July 22.

Cristina Palabay, president of the National Union of Students in the Philippines, said the program would show that protesting cadets could serve the community better by planting trees in Payatas and Balara in Quezon City, instead of attending ROTC classes on Sundays.

The NUSP and other student organizations are currently soliciting one million signatures nationwide to support the call for ROTC's abolition.

So far, Maglanoc said, the campaign has gathered at least 150,000 signatures from Metro Manila alone.

Once the signature hits one million, the list would be presented to President Macapagal during the opening of the 12th Congress.

At the end of the month, cadets will sponsor a benefit concert to drum up more awareness on the anti-ROTC campaign. Popular bands such as the Eraserheads and Slapshock have been invited.

In Tacloban City also yesterday, about 200 cadets walked out of their military training classes at the Leyte Institute of Technology.

The walkout led by students from the University of the Philippines in the Visayas-Tacloban (UP-Tacloban) and the Leyte State University (LNU) forced training officials to dismiss early the ROTC classes held at the LIT campus every Sunday morning.

At the nearby Leyte Colleges (LC), ROTC officials also decided to suspend its military training classes yesterday. They instead asked their cadets to "go home to their respective hometowns and make a research on the military history of their hometowns."

But Army Maj. Tomas Congzon, commandant of the LC ROTC said the assignment had nothing to do with the reported plan of their cadets to stage their own walkout.

Leyte Colleges has close to 2,000 cadets composed of students from the different vocational and computer schools in Tacloban City.

The LIT walk out was the first protest action by male college students in Leyte to dramatize their strong support for the abolition of the ROTC.

Navy First Class Alfredo Dacatimbang, assistant ROTC commandant of the LIT, told the INQUIRER that the students who joined the walkout would just be marked absent and would not be punished.

"They are just exercising their freedom of speech and assembly," he said. "We respect that."

He said the students could continue protesting for as long as they do it peacefully.

About 50 students from UP-Tacloban and LNU initiated the walkout about 9 a.m. yesterday. The protesters went around the school's campus encouraging those ROTC cadets still inside to join in the walkout.

Before 10 a.m., about 200 cadets left the school premises and later marched around the city's major streets.

But many of the cadets did not join the walkout for fear of reprisal.

"Much as we wanted to join the walk out, we cannot because of our fear that our officials might identify us and physically harass us later," said a freshman engineering student from the LIT.

Dexter Narido, a UP-Tacloban student and one of the leaders of the walkout, said that like their counterparts in Metro Manila, they want the ROTC abolished as it is a "useless" exercise and an unnecessary financial burden to parents.

Narido said they would continue to boycott the Sunday ROTC classes "until (ROTC) is abolished by the government."

Another student, who identified himself only as Rodney, said he joined the walkout because he knew that the ROTC is a "breeding ground for corruption among ROTC officials."

"Some of them (ROTC officials) accept money in exchange for exempting students who receive grades without undergoing the punishing ROTC military training," he said.

Rodney said he knew of fellow students who had paid from P1,500 to P2,000 just to be exempted from the two-year military training.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, July 16, 2001
15th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: **Ex 1:8-14, 22**
Gospel: **Mt 10:34—11:1**

Jesus said to his disciples, "Do not think that I have come to establish peace on earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father and daughter against her mother; a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. Each one will have as enemies those of one's own family.

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take up his cross and come after me is not worthy of me. One who wants to benefit from his life will lose it; one who loses his life for my sake will find it.

Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes him who sent me. The one who welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive the reward of a prophet; the one who welcomes a just man because he is a just man will receive the reward of a just man. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones, because he is a disciple of mine, I assure you, he will not go unrewarded."

When Jesus had finished giving his twelve disciples these instructions, he went on from there to teach and to proclaim his message in their towns.

Commentary

Today's reading is the concluding section of Matthew's Mission Discourse. The evangelist brings together a number of originally separate sayings and gives new meaning to them by placing them around verses that express the central tenets of discipleship and the corresponding mission: carrying the cross and following Jesus in search for a new definition of life. The apostles are not alone in their mission. To be noted is the strong link of mutuality that Matthew establishes between the messengers and the ones who accept these prophets. They will suffer the same fate but will also enjoy the same dignity and the same reward. Matthew clearly invites all Christians to participate in the mission of the twelve.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for having chosen us to participate in the mission of the apostles. Give us the strength to remain faithful to this mission.

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: claret@cn1.net; Websites:http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (CRIMINAL PROCEDURE)—General rule that the Court will not issue writs if prohibition to enjoin criminal prosecution; exceptions—As a general rule, the Court will not issue writs of prohibition or injunction preliminary or final, to enjoin or restrain, criminal prosecution. With more reason will injunction not lie when the case is still at the stage of preliminary investigation or reinvestigation. However, in extreme cases, we have laid the following exceptions: (1) when the injunction is necessary to afford adequate protection to the constitutional rights of the accused; (2) when it is necessary for the orderly administration of justice or to avoid oppression or multiplicity of actions; (3) when there is a prejudicial question which is *sub judice*; (4) when the acts of the officer are without or in excess of authority; (5) where the prosecution is under an invalid law, ordinance or regulation; (6) when double jeopardy is clearly apparent; (7) where the Court has no jurisdiction over the offense; (8) where it is a case of persecution rather than prosecution; (9) where the charges are manifestly false and motivated by the lust for vengeance; and (10) when there is clearly no *prima facie* case against the accused and a motion to quash on that ground had been denied. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Pardo, First Division, Samson v. Guingona, Jr., G.R. No. 123504, December 14, 2000]

Digest by R.B. Vera

Manny Paquiao could be of help to these boxers

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

(NOVEL TREAT: After his stint in the World Pool Championship in Cardiff, Wales, Efren "Bata" Reyes will go on an 80-city tour in the Visayas and Mindanao. Regional championships will be staged and Reyes will test the mettle of all the subsequent winners. It's his way of bringing the best to the provinces, explains veteran broadcaster Ed Picson, who says Reyes, despite a tight schedule, agreed and signed a contract to complete the tour. Picson says they also aim to discover new talents and at the same time display world-class prowess during the playing tour. Ed deserves praise and congratulations).

* * *

It's easy to get excited over Manny Pacquiao. He has the potentials to dominate the world super bantamweight division, says Teddy Reynoso, a keen boxing observer from Lungos, Bulacan, Bulacan who oozed with praises for what he called Pacquiao's newfound skill, power and stamina.

At this point, the sky is the limit for our boy, continues Mr. Reynoso, if he will just take his career and craft very seriously, much like Gabriel Elorde did in the '60s.

That's a nice one: Paquiao doing an Elorde.

Anyway, for starters, the newly crowned International Boxing Federation super bantamweight champion who made the Filipino very proud out in Las Vegas could have passed by his old gym at the Mandaluyong City Hall compound.

You see, Paquiao, a native son of General Santos City who also trained at the L & M Gym in Sampaloc, is considered an original product of the Mandaluyong Boxing Stable, a brainchild of ex-city mayor and now Metro Manila Development Authority chair Benjamin Abalos Sr.

* * *

It was in that gym where Pacquiao won the Oriental flyweight crown for his first taste of big time glory.

In fact, his stablemates really thought that, for old times' sake the new world champ would find time to drop by after his sensational return from Las Vegas.

Well, it's not really too late. And Pacquiao, knowing how he cares for friends, should be told of the predicament boxers at the Mandaluyong City stable, some 22 of them, are in.

On Friday night, fight manager Jimmy Zuno, after receiving another distress call, rushed to the grocery, picked up a box of sardines and personally delivered it to the gym.

Much earlier, one balding sportswriter clipped off P500 from the family's grocery budget and, together with a bag of canned goods, had it sent over to the poor boxers.

On Friday, civic leader Nandy Charvet, upon learning of the food shortage confronting the boxers, had a big box of assorted goodies—chocolate health drinks, canned pork and beans, corned beef—sent to the site.

* * *

This is an odd case. Jimmy Zuno, with no attachment to the Mandaluyong City government whatsoever, has been seeking out friends who would be kind enough to help the poor boxers in these trying times.

From what Zuno had told this reporter, the Mandaluyong fighters, although their upkeep is not in the city budget, used to be properly fed and attended to.

Zuno said that, from what he knew, City Treasurer William Marcelino, in a tie-up with ex-Mayor Ben Abalos, had put up a program whereby the boxers could subsist mainly on what they earned from the regular promotions featuring them at the Mandaluyong gym.

It was a cozy arrangement, said Zuno, until Treasurer Marcelino started to pay fewer visits to the gym.

Then Marcelino reportedly got sick, was hospitalized, and the poor boxers were left fending for themselves.

At times, they were so hard up, Zuno said, that they had to eat only cheap packed noodles for days on end.

Another fight manager, Pablo Garcia, had taken pity on the boxers. But last heard of, the poor guy had run out of extra cash for the underfed fighters in the city stable.

* * *

Well, in fairness to City Mayor Benhur Abalos, he had already sent out his administrator, Vic Victoria, to check on the situation.

Abalos acted upon being informed by Nandy Charvet that the fighters were in the stage of staging a mutiny. There was, however, no significant action from the city government at this reporting.

The fighters, who include such talents as flyweight Roger Galicia, dubbed the Golden Boy of the stable, Philippine Boxing Federation bantamweight champ Orly Padillo, and No. 1 RP welterweight contender Arex Montalban, could offer themselves to other managers. But what momentarily prevented the fighters from leaving en masse was the stern warning from Jimmy Zuno, who said they could be victimized by exploiters.

Now for a little situationer. The big box of groceries donated by Mr. Charvet landed in my apartment.

I readily called up Jimmy Zuno and the guy had it picked up Friday afternoon. Three fellows in a van later showed up, one identified himself as Bong, short, doe-eyed and pot-bellied.

I turned over the box to him, but only after asking what really was the matter.

Nothing, this guy named Bong said, everything is fine in the boxing gym. Then why would people go pass the hat around for the boxers' sake? I asked.

He shook his head. From what he knew, he said, there was nothing wrong out there in the Mandaluyong City Boxing stable. There was no problem, he insisted.

Anyway, before parting with the groceries, I made an ocular count and made special note of three—yes, three—hefty bags of Milo choco drink on top of the bundle.

When Jimmy Zuno next asked the boxers what they had received, they swore they got only one bag of Milo powdered drink. Yes, only one!

Of course, what remained of the canned groceries still reached the hungry fighters. No problem.

BONIFACIO
LAND CORPORATION

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND SUBMIT PROPOSALS

Bonifacio Land Corporation (BLC) through the Fort Bonifacio Development Corporation (FBDC) is inviting all interested parties to pre-qualify and submit proposals for the acquisition of its interest in New Company (Newco), a realty company to be formed within the Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines.

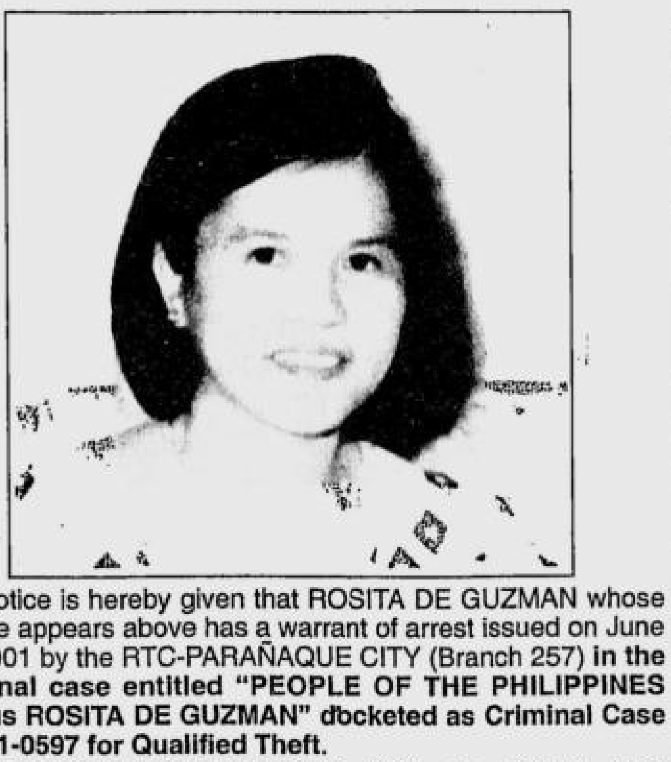
All interested parties are requested to submit a Letter of Intent to BLC, a signed Confidentiality Agreement and a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Ten Thousand (Php 10,000.00) payable to FBDC before obtaining the Memorandum. The Memorandum is available until 15 August 2001 from the FBDC office, Building A, Bonifacio Centre, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines.

For more information on the Bonifacio Global City project, visit *www.fbglobalcity.com* or e-mail us at *disposition@fbglobalcity.com.*

BLC reserves the right to amend, modify, expand, reduce or adjust any portion or provision of the Program, Concept, terms, conditions and guidelines prior to the bidding date, as well as reject any or all proposals, to waive deficiencies therein, without assuming any obligation whatsoever as to expenses or losses that interested proponents may incur in the preparation of their proposals.

(Sgd.) **RICARDO S. PASCUA**
Chairman

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC



Notice is hereby given that ROSITA DE GUZMAN whose picture appears above has a warrant of arrest issued on June 11, 2001 by the RTC-PARAÑAQUE CITY (Branch 257) **in the criminal case entitled "PEOPLE OF THE PHILIPPINES versus ROSITA DE GUZMAN" docketed as Criminal Case No. 01-0597 for Qualified Theft.**

METROLAB INDUSTRIES INC. c/o SARA LEE PHILIPPINES INC. (Lot 2C Dona Irenea St., Ireneville I Subd., Sucat, Parañaque City, Tel. No. 826-00-95) which is the complaining party in the aforementioned case shall **GIVE REWARD** for any information that will lead to her arrest.

Please direct calls to Atty. DANIEL KENDRICK TUMANGAN or in his absence to Ms. MARIBEL ROQUE at Telephone No. 848-0144.

(PDI – July 15 & 16, 2001)

Engineer . . .

(From page A25)

Security guard Dionisio Bionagan, 40, told investigators that he heard a noise from the ground floor of the building seconds before he saw huge flames coming from the area.

The victims were said to be sleeping in a room on the second floor.

Bionagan said he immediately set off the fire alarm and phoned the Manila Fire Department.

Several firefighters on board at least 14 fire trucks arrived and were able to put out the fire at 2:58 a.m., Insp. Jaudian said.

The fire reached the fifth alarm, he added.

The bodies of the victims were found charred and lying face down on the ground floor.

Jaudian said the victims appeared to have been looking for an exit when the flames caught up with them.

Their bodies were brought to Funenaria Paz on Tomas Mapua Street, Manila.

Gordon tries color-coding for Metro taxis

METRO Manila's taxi drivers will be among the first sectors to be initiated into the "culture of tourism" that Tourism Secretary Richard J. Gordon has envisioned.

With the Department of Tourism at the lead, several government agencies are also involved in molding cab drivers into honest, efficient and courteous tourism workers.

Representatives from these agencies will sign a memorandum of agreement on July 26 kicking off the campaign.

The campaign includes color-coding for taxis and their drivers, which Gordon had successfully implemented in Olongapo when he was mayor of that Zambales city.

"Taxi drivers play a key role in tourism," Gordon said. "They give one of the first impressions a traveler gets upon arriving in a country, so it is important that that first impression is a good one."

Under the agreement, a task force will oversee the "reeducation" of taxi drivers applying for DOT accreditation.

Represented in the task force will be the DOT, the Department of Transportation and Communications, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, the Land Transportation Office, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, the Manila International Airport Authority and taxi operators.

Under the memorandum of agreement, only DOT-accredited taxis will be allowed to take passengers, especially tourists, to and from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Taxi operators must field only fully air-conditioned cabs with white seat covers, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, calibrated meters and radio transceivers.

The units must not be more than five years old, and their body number and the name of the operator must be written in the color assigned to the town or city where the operator holds office.

Maroon has been chosen for taxis from Pasay City, blue for those from Parañaque, green for those from Quezon City and brown for those from Makati.

All accredited cabs will be painted yellow with top lights marked "tourist taxi."

Gordon said taxi drivers would undergo a tourism frontiers course where they would be taught discipline and proper decorum.

The cabbies will also be required to wear uniforms with nametags and identification cards.

"The uniform requirement works both ways," he explained. "We will be able to easily identify the subject of complaints as well as the subject of praise."

Taxi operators have six months to comply with the new requirements.

"That's enough time for them to make the adjustments," Gordon said. "Once the provisions go into effect, we will be very strict in enforcing them."

Cash prizes offered for drug information

By Dave M. Veridiano

THE GOVERNMENT'S premier anti-narcotics agency will pay from P1, 000 to P1.3 million in cash for any information that could lead to the seizure of prohibited drugs such as methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu), cocaine and heroin, and the arrest of the drug pushers.

The incentive is not only for concerned citizens but also for insiders of drug syndicates who want to give up the illegal activities and avoid or minimize their criminal liability.

A much bigger cash reward awaits those who can provide information that can lead to the identification and forfeiture of laundered money, property, business and bank accounts of illegal drug traffickers.

Once the information results in a positive operation, the corresponding reward will be immediately given to the informant.

This project, called "Operation Private Eye, was officially launched last week during the news briefing on the national drug situation held at the headquarters of the National Drug Law Enforcement and Prevention Coordinating Center (NDEP Center) in Camp Crame.

The announcement of the reward system was contained in a flyer which will be distributed all over the country.

During the briefing, Director Miguel Coronel, chief of the NDEP, said that the country could become the next Colombia if the local drug problem would remain unchecked.

Coronel earlier said that at least 1.7 million people in the Philippines are either hooked on drugs or are drug dependents and that 70 percent of heinous crimes committed are drug-related.

But Coronel said the NDEP, in coordination with other law enforcement agencies, is doing everything to combat the drug problem.

Coronel announced last Tuesday that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has approved the government's National Anti-Drug Program of Action.

The program of action is aimed at making the country drug-free by year 2010.

President Macapagal's letter of instruction said the estimated value of the illicit drug trade is now about P250 to P300 billion a year, 95 percent of which is in shabu.

"This has resulted in billions of dollars worth of much-needed and hard-earned foreign exchange going down the drain and even causing 70 percent of the heinous crimes, further clogging the dockets of the courts and congesting jails, with additional 20,000 drug cases per annum," the LOI said.

The LOI revealed that drug syndicates are investing dirty money in businesses that can readily drive out of competition the legitimate businessmen.

Repair man stabbed dead

WHEN self-employed Jhan-jhan Mengollo left his Quezon City home Saturday night to collect his fee for repairing his neighbor's bed, he did not return home back alive.

Mengollo, 21, of Purok 20, Mondragon, St. Phase II Lupang Pangako, Barangay Payatas, Quezon City was stabbed to death before he could get back home, said investigator PO3 Leo Tabuena, of the Central Police District-Criminal Investigation Unit.

Police said Mengollo left home about 7:30 p.m. Saturday and went to the house of his neighbor, identified only as Turagsog. Mengollo had repaired a folding bed for Turagsog and wanted to collect his fee for the job, police said.

Minutes later, Romel Mingalio saw Mengollo slumped by the roadside in a pool of blood, police said.

Mingalio told police that he approached Mengollo but found him already dead.

Police said Mengollo died from several stab wounds in the body.

His body was brought to the Philippine National Police Crime Laboratory for an autopsy.

Police are now looking for witnesses in the killing. *Philip C. Tubeza*

Exec robbed

AN EXECUTIVE of the Caltex oil company lost his car to thieves last Wednesday night in Pasig City.

Ichkoy de Leon, brand manager of Caltex, told police he parked his gray Mitsubishi Lancer (WJH-)896 along San Miguel Avenue in Pasig near El Pueblo at around 9 p.m. on Wednesday.

When he came back for his car about two hours later, his car was no longer there, he said.

De Leon reported the loss to police but was told it would take three months for police to complete a report, during which he would not be able to collect insurance. *Alcuin Papa*

Random acts of urban kindness

By Mario Cornejo

THE METROPOLIS can kill you in a thousand ways.

I borrowed and paraphrased—okay, stole—that line from Jon Voight's character in the movie "Anaconda." He was talking about the Amazon River, but I'm sure you can appreciate that the line applies ever so succinctly to Metro Manila.

You've heard the stories. You've gotten the scary e-mail. People being kidnapped and raped, murdered and scammed. This city has us all scared to our boots, wary of danger from all quarters. If the crime and violence doesn't kill you, the additives in your pearl shake will.

Fear is now a permanent fixture in the kitchen of our psyche. But once in a while, this city can surprise us with random acts of urban kindness.

So, with apologies to Snoopy...

It was a dark and stormy night...

I was driving home in the wee hours. The day's rain had turned the streets to mush, and the potholes were, like, reaaally big. So naturally I ran right into one. And, of course, I got a flat tire.

No big deal. I can change a tire in the rain in front of a squatter community at two in the morning by myself. No problem.

Ten minutes later I'm nursing a bleeding hand and cursing a blue streak. Then suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I saw a stranger approach. He immediately started unscrewing the lug nuts without hesitation. And I reacted just as any recipient of a good deed reacts, with utmost suspicion.

"*Okay lang, kaya ko 'yan* (It's okay, I can handle it),' I said. To his credit, the stranger recognized my words for what they were, sheer bravado and barefaced lie. His smile disarmed me, and his quickness with the tire wrench impressed and intimidated me.

In mere minutes it was over. The spare was in place and I was set to roll. I thanked my rescuer and was ready, even anxious, to part ways. Then something strange occurred.

He wouldn't take the money. I offered him cash and he just wouldn't take it.

I was stunned, to say the least. This is Metro Manila, after all. This city doesn't have citizens, it has denizens. And yet here was this man, who apparently did a kind deed for a complete stranger and refused to be compensated for the selfless act.

All I could think was, Is this guy for real?

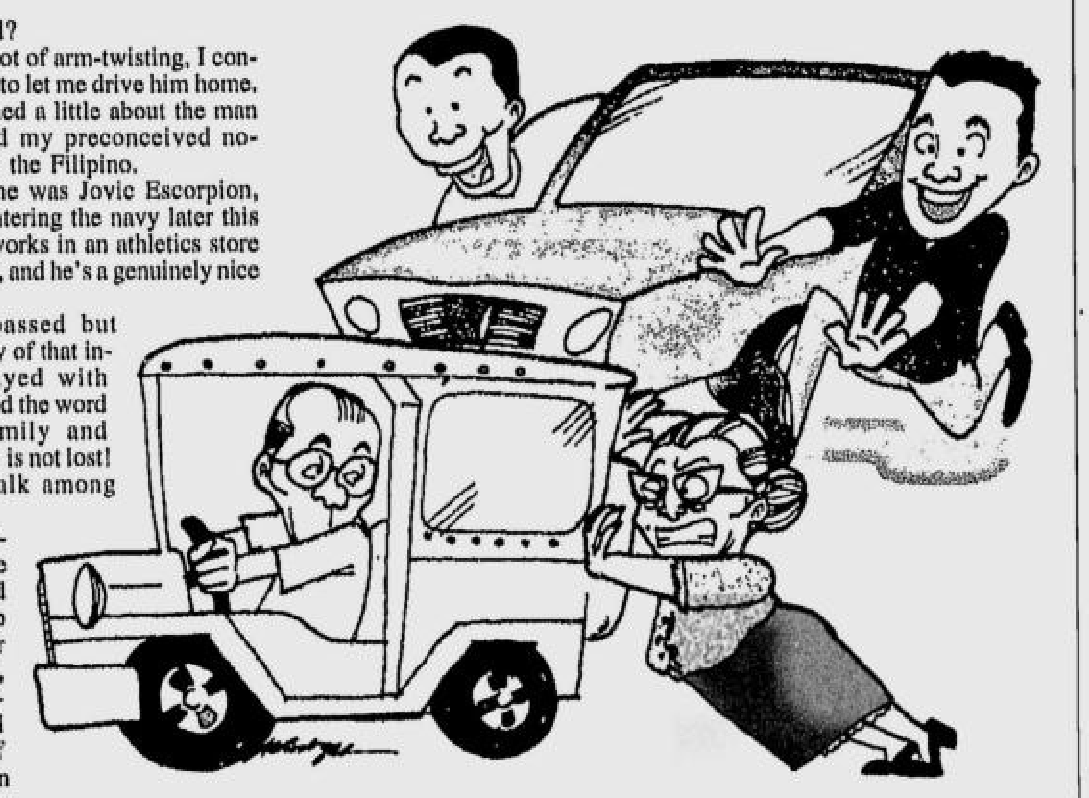
After a lot of arm-twisting, I convinced him to let me drive him home. And I learned a little about the man who defied my preconceived notions about the Filipino.

His name was Jovic Escorpion, and he's entering the navy later this year. He works in an athletics store in Glorietta, and he's a genuinely nice guy.

Days passed but the memory of that incident stayed with me. I spread the word to my family and friends: All is not lost! Angels walk among us!

His ten-minute good deed cheered up a number of people, and restored some of our faith in our fellow man.

But the story doesn't end there.



Superheroes

One afternoon, I had a brilliant idea. Why not dedicate one afternoon and roam the city looking to help strangers in need? Let this one selfless act create ripples, and spread forth like oral herpes.

I immediately called my friend and fellow bum Jory and asked him what he thought of the idea, and if he'd like to help me in my quest. He was immediately vaguely intrigued and gripped by mild enthusiasm.

"We'd be like, superheroes?" he said.

Superheroes. Perfect.

Later that day I picked him up and we started cruising the streets although, given our mission, perhaps "patrolling" would be a better word. We took our superhero role seriously, eyes peeled for any person in any sort of need except possibly monetary.

While we never discussed the whole "who's the hero and who's the sidekick" issue, in my mind I was thinking, since it was my idea, I should be the hero. I'm sure he had his own fantasy going on and I didn't want to burst his bubble at the time.

The adventure begins...

Mere minutes into our adventure, while passing a squatter community, we saw a child of about four years crying as blood flowed down his forehead. This was it. Our chance to be heroes!

I jumped out of the car and talked to the boy's mother, who was screaming at another child for having pushed her son and causing the bleeding. Examining the wound, I saw that the lightning-shaped cut was very deep, and would require stitches.

Actually, it was so bad my stomach started getting queasy. I pulled myself together, though, reminding myself that Batman would never have puked at the sight of blood and gristle.

We offered to drive them to the nearest hospital and even pay for the expenses, but the mother seemed wary of the idea, perhaps as suspicious as I was when Jovic helped me with my flat tire. We argued back and forth for a long while, until the blood flow started to subside and the decision was made for us by platelets.

We left dejected, having proven that truth which direct marketers never seem to understand: Hard selling sucks. Now for the rest of my life if I ever see a boy with a lightning scar on his forehead like Harry Potter, I'll be consumed by guilt.

The rest of the day was a bust. No one looked like they needed any help. We saw a group of exotic dancers on their way to work, but they wore their oppression lightly, so nothing seemed appropriate at the time.

Thus our day as superheroes ended rather disappointingly. We didn't get to pass on the good deed to anybody. It was like that guilty feeling you get when you break a chain letter.

Lucky for us, the story doesn't end there, either.

The day is saved

One night we were driving along when we saw an old woman trying to push-start an owner jeep with her husband driving. Jory and I looked at each other and the same thought flashed through our heads: Now's our chance!

We jumped out of our car and started pushing. Unfortunately, it became obvious that the problem wasn't a dead battery. There was something seriously wrong with that car. However, the old couple begged us to keep trying, and give it "one last chance."

Eight last chances later, we huffed and puffed and swore to them by the hairs of our chinny chin chins that we had done all we could. They needed a mechanic.

We were about to chalk this up as another failure when we saw the faces of the old couple, grateful as could be for our efforts. It was all worthwhile, after all.

Just like with Jovic, the act of performing a kindness was far more valuable than the actual result.

Everyday now I'm on the lookout, patrolling our fair city for any random acts of urban kindness. You should try it. The world looks different when you're trying to change it.

And with Jory moving back to the US in a few weeks, I'm now holding auditions for a new sidekick.

(e-mail the author at mariocornejo99@yahoo.com)

Philippine Airlines not moving to Naia 3

By TJ Burgonio

THE PHILIPPINE Airlines will not transfer to the $500-million Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) terminal 3 when the terminal opens in December 2002 because this will entail huge costs.

PAL officials last month wrote the terminal operator, Philippine International Air Terminals Co. Inc. (Piatco), about their decision not to move their operations to Naia 3, according to an airline insider who asked not to be named.

The officials pointed out that a transfer of their operations from Naia 2 to Naia 3 would cost them an additional P3 billion for aircraft, ground equipment and manpower, according to the source.

"If they could have their way, they'd rather stay at Naia 2," the source said.

Presently, PAL exclusively uses Naia terminal 2 and employs common aircraft, equipment and ground handling crew for its international and domestic operations.

This set-up could change if it agrees to transfer to Naia, which under the 1997 concession agreement between the government and Piatco would serve as the only international airport in Luzon—except those already built—and would service all international airlines, including PAL.

Once Naia 3 becomes operational, Naia 2 will be converted into a domestic terminal and Naia 1 will be turned into either a shopping complex or a cargo terminal.

Besides, a PAL transfer to Naia 3 would jeopardize the airline's five-year rehabilitation plan, which is hinged on one terminal operation, the source said.

When it reopened in October 1998 following a workers' crippling strike, PAL was placed under receivership and its decision to operate in one terminal as part of its rehabilitation was approved by the government.

If PAL complied with the government-Piatco agreement, it would have to move its international operations to Naia 3 but maintain its domestic operations at Naia 2.

"The officials believe that the transfer would destroy the airline's rehabilitation plan, whose main thrust is one-terminal operation," the source said.

PAL gained a net profit of P4 4million during the first year of its rehabilitation (1999-2000) and a whopping P430 million in the following year, according to the source.

Piatco has rejected PAL's decision to stay put at Naia 2 and its proposal that Piatco and PAL share the cost of building a domestic terminal for the flag-carrier near Naia 3, according to other sources.

Talks between PAL and Piatco to reach a compromise agreement fell through, the sources said.

PAL is part of the Association of MIA-Naia Association of Service Operators (Maso), which aired an appeal to Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez to review the concession agreement, saying it's onerous and disadvantageous to the government.

Upon his return from Malaysia on Saturday, Alvarez, however, dared the group to file a case in court. "If you have a proper course of action, go to court," Alvarez said.

Fatigue uniform alert

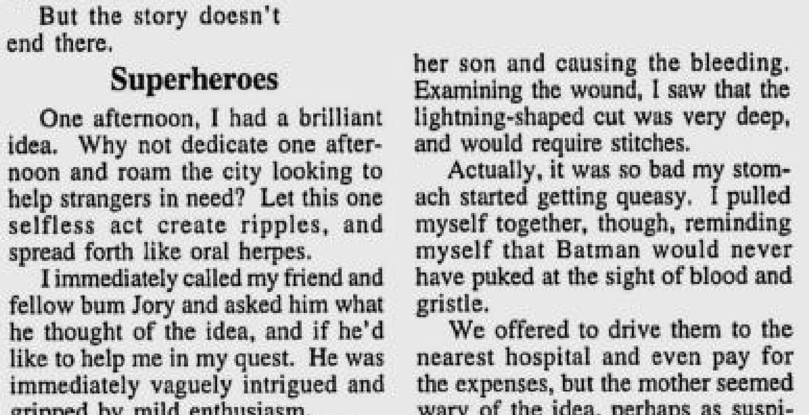
By Nelson F. Flores

MAKATI City police chief Supt. Jovito Gutierrez last week ordered the arrest of all people wearing fatigue or camouflage attires in a bid to prevent bank robberies in the city.

Gutierrez said his order is in compliance with a directive issued by Mayor Jejomar Binay ordering him to strictly implement Article 179 of the Penal Code, the law prohibiting the unauthorized use of insignia or wearing of unauthorized uniforms. He said violation of the law is punishable with one to six months imprisonment.

Gutierrez said that even the International Committee of the Red Cross prohibits the wearing of camouflage uniforms, which is usually associated with the military. He noted that bank robbers are usually clad in military attire.

But former city councilor Mark Joseph said it is wrong to presume that every wearer of camouflage uniform is a bank robber.



CALOOCAN, NOT NAVOTAS

Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco wrote to correct the caption of this picture that appeared in the July 8 edition of this section. Photographer Edwin Bacasmas identified the location as "along the railroad tracks" in Navotas. "The picture could not have been taken in Navotas," Tiangco wrote, "because Navotas has no railroad tracks. . . the picture gives the impression that we in Navotas do not take community cleanliness seriously. We do."

'Crackdown on supporters of Abu Sayyaf only strengthens rebels'

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE MILITANT group Sanlakas yesterday warned that the military would only strengthen the Abu Sayyaf if it continues its crackdown on suspected civilian supporters of the bandit group.

"The worst error of the military crackdown is the insane idea that the Abu Sayyaf will be eradicated by eliminating its civilian base through repression," said Sanlakas president Wilson Fortaleza.

"The inevitable abuses that will be committed by the military are bound to intensify resistance and rebellion. Repression of the Moro population will only bring more recruits to the ragtag army of the Abu Sayyaf," Fortaleza said.

He explained that the Abu Sayyaf is "a child of the historical injustice suffered by the Bangsamoro people" and the vacuum created by the surrender of the Moro National Liberation Front that once led the Muslim secessionist struggle in the South.

"Unless the GMA government fully recognizes this fact, their military solution to a social problem is bound to fail," Fortaleza said.

Earlier, Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan, armed forces spokesperson, warned that it might take the government about 50 years to eradicate the Abu Sayyaf if the bandit group's civilian supporters are not dealt with or won over to the government's side.

Fortaleza said that the administration's change of tactics is an admission that the all-out war against Abu Sayyaf is a failure.

"It is an acknowledgment by the GMA administration of a level of popular support by so-called bandits," he added.

Fortaleza also warned of more human rights violations as the "state-of-confusion" continues in Mindanao.

MMDA seeks legislative authority

By Nelson F. Flores

METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. yesterday asked Congress to grant legislative powers to the MMDA to ensure the continued development of Metro Manila.

But Abalos stressed that the areas of MMDA's legislation should be limited only to issues concerning Metro Manila's growth, which include housing and land use, traffic management, waste disposal, environment protection and sanitation.

Through the Metro Manila Council, Abalos said the MMDA can only urge city or municipal executives to act on an issue, but it has no power to ensure compliance from them.

The MMC, which is composed of all city and municipal mayors of Metro Manila, is the policy making body of the MMDA. It is powerless, however, to effect any meaningful developmental program for Metro Manila in the absence of legislative powers, even of a limited nature.

As a legislative body, Abalos said the MMC should be given the power to realize their plans through legislative actions.

He added that the current setup, which empowers MMC to only issue guidelines and resolutions, is clearly insufficient.

Abalos said these resolutions have no legal effect until the respective legislative bodies of each city or municipal governments of the metropolis act on them.

He added that the only thing that the MMDA can do is wait for the passage of the ordinances before any affirmative actions could be taken.

Meanwhile, Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay and Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte threatened to stop their monthly contributions to the MMDA.

Citing the failure of the agency to resolve the garbage problem, the two mayors said there is no need for them to continue their financial contributions to the MMDA.

But Abalos said that contrary to the claims of the two local executives, the MMDA is doing its job, although he admitted that there is still room for improvement.

He said he could not understand why Binay, who was responsible for the institutionalization of the mandatory local government units' contributions to the MMDA, would want to stop them.

Abalos said that under the law, the local government units' contributions to the MMDA are automatically deducted from their respective internal revenue allocation (IRA).

He added that Binay, a former MMDA chair, vigorously supported the law on the mandatory contributions of local governments to the MMDA.

BAND ON THE ROPES

Members of the circus troupe band, the Wiremen's Band, do their usual Sunday practice of their high-wire act at the Manuel Luis Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Waiters beat up lawyer

By Agnes Donato

A LAWYER was beaten up on Saturday night after he allegedly refused to pay his bills for liquor he consumed and the services of a guest relations officer (GRO) at a beerhouse in Mandaluyong City.

Lawyer Cesar Roldan, 56, assigned with the Branch 59 of the Mandaluyong Court of Justice and resident of Barangay Barangka in Mandaluyong, accused waiters Albert Olquino, 20, of Barangay Plainview; Christian Labarte, 18, of Barangay Addition Hills; and Ivan Fuentes, 21, of Welfareville Compound of manhandling him.

Roldan and two companions went to the Loveness Beerhouse on Boni Avenue about 5 p.m. and ordered food and bottles of beer, said PO3 Julius Cesar Pinera, officer on case.

After finishing their drinks, the three went to the second floor of the club to continue their drinking session, police said. Roldan even engaged the services of a GRO when his two companions left after finishing their drinks, police said.

When he asked for his bill about 8 p.m., Roldan went to the counter and paid only P1,000 of the P1,500 total, police said.

Boots Marquez, owner of the beerhouse, told police that they tried to talk to Roldan about his bill but the lawyer refused to pay the rest of the amount. He said this prompted the waiters to beat up Roldan.

Charges of estafa were filed against Roldan who in turn filed charges of physical injuries against the waiters.

But after negotiations, both parties dropped their complaints, police said.

New Cavite gov wages war on drugs, garbage

By Joven S. Joya

MALIKSI

MOTORISTS passing the coastal road to Island Cove in Binakayan, Cavite shudder at the sight of a river blighted by floating garbage. And past the island resort, where the river meets the sea, they see a lot more bobbing and undulating wastes.

Though ensconced in the air-conditioned comfort of their cars or FX Tamaraws taxis, motorists and commuters automatically hold their breath as if the stench of the soaked garbage could reach them.

Such is the state of the rivers in historic Cavite, home to the nation's more prominent revolutionaries. Old folk who had experienced drinking straight from a river with cupped hands wonder how historians would write about their province of birth in the future: Cavite—home to revolutionaries and polluted rivers? Not far-fetched if the sorry state of garbage disposal won't be arrested by the present provincial leadership.

Environmentalists in Cavite see a glimmer of hope in Governor-elect Ayong Saquilayan Maliksi. They note how their ex-celebrity governor had resorted to sloganeering to drum up interest in the garbage problems of the province without actually telling them how to solve them or where to properly dump their wastes. Billboards and streamers extolling the virtues of having clean rivers and clean air would not dispel the problems, they said; action would.

Maliksi was for 10 years mayor of Imus, from 1988 to 1998.

Selling drugs

Drug addiction, too, has so worsened in Cavite that in some areas, like a neighborhood called Balang (which means locust) in Barangay Hulugan in Tanza town, shabu is said to be sold openly like it were an item in a *sari-sari* store.

According to concerned residents of the barangay, speaking on condition of anonymity, when a buyer enters Balang, residents compete for his money by telling him, and not in whispers, that their product is of a higher grade. The mode of selling there is not much unlike the arm-pulling method of stall holders in the food sections of Divisoria and Central Market in Manila.

The situation is not helped any by local police who make indiscriminate arrests of supposed drug users but who reportedly release them without reaching the municipal jail, for a few thousand pesos.

The going rate is said to be between P3,000 and P5,000 for drug dependents and P10,000 and up for alleged drug pushers. Or, if the alleged users or pushers are jailed, they quickly post bail after cases are filed against them.

This writer knows of one drug user who was arrested thrice and who posted bail twice at P6,000 each (non-reimbursable, said the presiding judge), but who is yet to attend the first hearing for each case filed against him.

Total war

According to figures from the PNP Directorate for Operations, from January to September 19997, Region IV, which includes Cavite, recorded the highest number of cases reported for violation of the Dangerous Drugs Law or Republic Act No. 6425. The same data showed that Cavite ranked second, after Laguna, in the number of people arrested in the same period (2,141), third in the number of cases filed in court (1,466), and second in terms of total grams of shabu confiscated (11,277 grams).

It was a total war against these peddlers of death and gloom that Maliksi declared when he launched his candidacy for Cavite governor. And during his June 28 oath-taking—on the exact spot where 105 years ago Filipinos won their first victory in the long struggle against Spanish colonial rule — he warned that under his governance, Cavite has only two places for them. It's either jail or the cemetery.

Maliksi had to survive charges that ranged from funny to absurd. A man of lesser fiber would have lost his cool, but not this native of Imus and grandson of a revolutionary hero, Col. Hipolito Saquilayan who led the Battle of Alapan also in Imus on Sept. 10, 1896. His opponents pictured him in flyers as having a hand in the murder of PR man Buddy Dacer and his driver.

Landfill issue

One story from the opposition which made it to some newspapers did make him lose his temper. His aides said this concerned a published press release saying he and the Remulla family were planning to convert Carmona town into a vast landfill once he got elected. Maliksi sent his staff to dig up records, leading to the discovery of a resolution that made Carmona a landfill, with the former governor, Bong Revilla, as one of the first signatories.

Maliksi had reason to bristle at the charge that he was anti-environment. He is after all a current member of the Makalikasan Foundation, a multi-sectoral organization set up in 1997 to help solve the ecological problems of the province.

"I am anything but anti-environment," he said on his first day of office as Cavite governor.

He had earlier recognized the need for a comprehensive environment program for the whole province to address its increasingly aggravating environmental problems. His work in this field led early on to the establishment in 1991 of the Sagip-Ilog (ng Kabite) Foundation, of which he was a charter officer, and the initiation of his Zero Waste Program.

Sagip-Ilog is a non-government organization tasked to help clean up the rivers of Cavite. Zero Waste, during his time as mayor of Imus, mobilized the 97 barangays and the homeowners in 240 subdivisions of his town to help tackle the problem of garbage disposal.

As a result of this program, Imus received two top awards during the 1995 presidential awards for the cleanest and greenest local government units in the country.

More than history was involved when the new governor chose the site of the famous Battle of Imus as venue for his oath-taking. The battle went on to become the turning point of the revolution. It reenergized demoralized Katipuneros to resume fighting with renewed ferocity until the Spanish colonialists were ousted.

With a bronze Castrillo sculpture depicting the battle at the intersection of Col. Jose B. Tagle Street and the Sta. Isabel Bridge as backdrop, Maliksi declared: "If this battle inspired our forefathers to win the revolution, the new administration will work to give our children a fighting chance for a peaceful, progressive and prosperous Cavite."

Rowdy drinker shot dead in Caloocan

By Christian V. Esguerra

ONE OF three unidentified men on Saturday gunned down a rowdy drinker for teasing them in a restaurant in Caloocan City.

Victor Monteroso, 25, a construction worker and resident of Camagong Street, Silanganan Subdivision, Barangay Llano, Caloocan, died from several gunshot wounds in the body, police said.

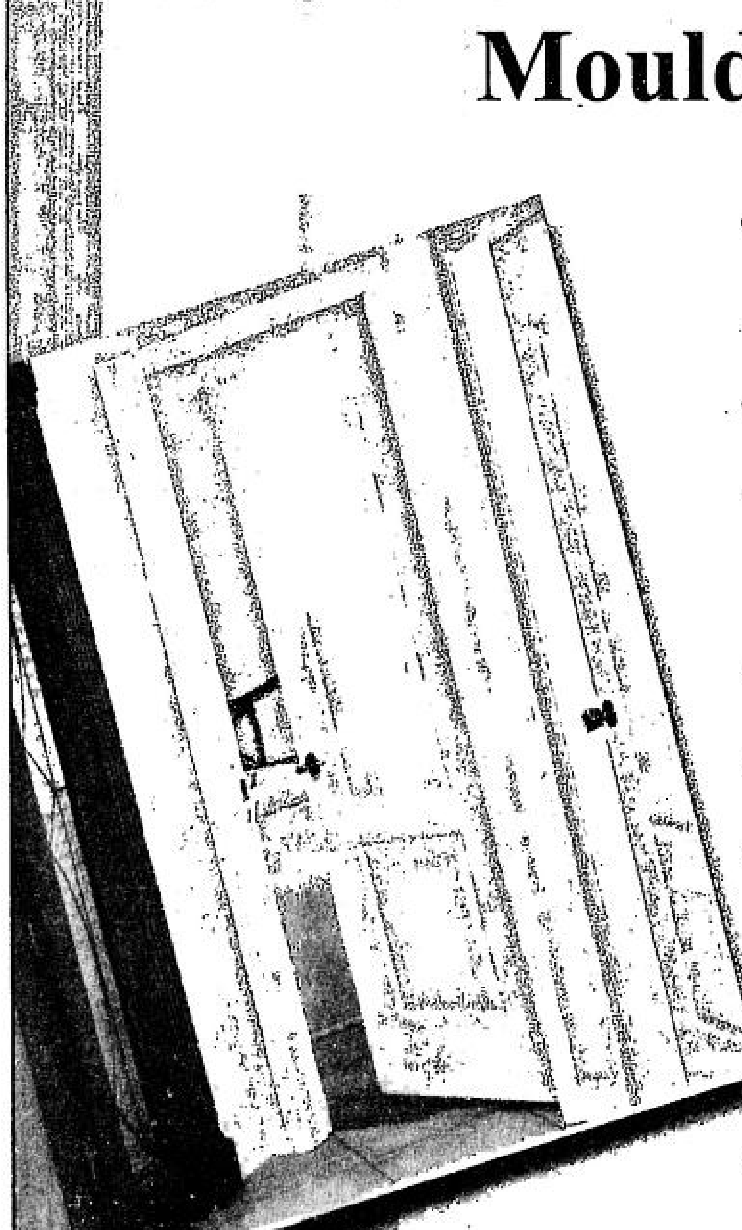
The shooting happened while Monteroso and a companion were drinking beer at Cora-Babes Eatery at the corner of Llano Street and Samson Road.

When he became very drunk, Monteroso became rowdy and teased the three men who were occupying a nearby table, said case investigator SPO1 Gaudencio Domingo.

One of the three men pulled out a .45-caliber pistol and repeatedly shot Monteroso, police said.

The gunman and his two companions then drove away in a light-blue car.

Police recovered several spent shells of .45-caliber pistol at the crime scene.



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The boys in the session band

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

MOST people who watch concerts live or on television judge the shows or performances by the vocal prowess of the lead singers. They are convinced that a Martin Nievera, a Gary Valenciano or a Regine Velasquez makes an expensive show worth the price of the ticket.

These big singers, however, would be among the first to say no, they don't deserve all the credit. They know only too well that behind every great performance is a group of musicians who complement the performer.

TAYLO

SALONGA

MERCADO

AGUAS

VILLENA

These men and women, called session artists, help singers sound their best, whether on compact discs or on the live concert stage.

Cesar Aguas

If you want the best lead guitar player, the choices are limited to about four. One of these is Cesar Aguas.

An industrial engineer graduate from Adamson University, Cesar started playing the guitar when he was four years old. One of his uncles was a guitar player.

Aguas did not immediately go into guitar playing as a profession. He worked full-time for a company for seven years but he eventually heeded the call of the strings and started playing professionally in 1986.

"Aside from my love of music, I was drawn to the guitar because it has always been my hobby. The best thing about it is that I get paid to do something I love."

As a young guitar player he was inspired by guitar greats like James Taylor and the bands Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young and America.

But he considers fellow Filipino guitar player Menchu Apostol as the reason behind his decision to become a professional guitar player.

"I would say he was the one who discovered me. I considered him an inspiration because of the variety of the music that he could play. He knew everything and I wanted to be like that."

Aguas in fact became what he wanted to be, making a name for himself as one of the best in the industry. In 1988, he was part of the back-up band for Sharon Cuneta. He also arranged recordings for other artists like Regine, Pops Fernandez and Agot Isidro.

Bobby Taylo

Music runs in the blood of bass player Bobby Taylo, whose father Ray played lead guitar in a roving band that played Spanish songs. Ray was also a TV heartthrob in the Sixties, when he played the lead in a long-running afternoon soap on TV.

Bobby Taylo was not even in college yet when he first saw somebody play the bass guitar, and he was immediately hooked. It was not just because of the sexy sound of the bass strings but the way bass guitar players make the playing look so cool.

Taylo started by doing the rounds of clubs singing folk songs in 1975. When his father learned about his playing, he took Bobby into the band. For two months, the younger Taylo learned to play and sing Spanish songs.

"I did not go through college anymore. I went to Japan with Dad. But after I while I wanted to stay here and I did not want to sing. I wanted to do something related to it, so I was introduced to the life of being a session musician."

He played with Kuh Ledesma's former band Music and Magic in 1983 and then did back-up work for Zsa Zsa Padilla, Gary Valenciano and Louie Ocampo.

As far as Taylo is concerned, Paul McCartney and Peter Cetera of Chicago are among the best bass players around. Among local artists, he considers Roger Herrera the best.

"If I were to choose between singing and playing, I would choose playing. I really love this job although I also like arranging songs and directing shows for artists like Gary, Martin, Zsa Zsa and Louie Heredia."

Roy Mercado

Just like Bobby Taylo, drummer Roy Mercado was born with music filling his home. His parents were both musicians and his two elder brothers were accomplished guitar and keyboard players. He took to the drums when he was 11.

"I learned how to play drums through self study. We had an old set of drums at home and I learned how to play on my own. My family and I played together for some time both here and abroad."

John Bonham of Led Zeppelin was one of his first idols when he was in his rock phase, as well as Pepe Smith of the Juan de la Cruz band. These days, he can play drums to accompany any kind of music, from rock and roll to jazz and pop.

"I guess I learned it because I grew up with music in the house. I learned on my own but eventually I also learned how to read notes."

He later started playing the drums as a session musician. He went to Vicor in 1981 and played for popular artists of the time like Basil Valdez and Carmen Pateña and for musical director Homer Flores.

Mercado says being a session musician is a good source of livelihood but only when the musician strives to be the best. It is not enough to be good at it today, he says. You have to continue learning new material.

"You have to keep abreast of today's kind of music. You have to study and change with the times. The best session musicians do that."

He says session musicians also have to be inspired even when they don't really like the kind of music they have to play, he says.

Mel Villena

From the time he played in the marching band of La Salle Greenhills, Villena knew that music would be his life.

"As early as when I was 10 years old, I was already fascinated with music. I saw some of the *kanto* boys in my neighborhood in San Juan and immediately I wanted to learn playing music."

When his parents saw that he was interested, they enrolled him in a music school where he learned to play the keyboards. In high school, he joined the La Salle musical group Kundirana.

"When our Kundirana musical director left the brotherhood, he formed a band and I was one of the people he got. We used to play along Roxas Boulevard and we played with a group called Haraya and Pilita Corrales."

Villena pursued his passion in college, taking up composition in the University of the Philippines. Early marriage kept him from finishing his course but it did not stop him from performing.

Villena, who also does arrangements, joined professional bands. Today, he works in a band playing backup music for Sharon Cuneta.

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6	DR. DO LITTLE

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1	SWORD FISH
2	SOON TO OPEN
3	PANGAKO IKAW LANG
4	ALONG CAME A SPIDER
5	DRIVEN
6	AMORSEKO
7	FINAL FANTASY
8	DR. DO LITTLE

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453

1	TOMB RAIDER
2	EVOLUTION
3	DUNGEONS & DRAGONS
4	ANGEL EYES
5	CITY OF SIN
6	MILA

SOON TO OPEN

METRO EAST
ILOILO
SAN FERNANDO PAMPANGA

THX DOLBY DIGITAL DOLBY STEREO dts SDDS

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	PANGAKO, IKAW LANG
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	TOMB RAIDER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDB)	DRIVEN
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	SWORD FISH
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	FINAL FANTASY
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	ALONG CAME SPIDER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	DR. DO LITTLE 2
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	AMORSEKO
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	ONSEHAN
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SENSUAL / SECRET GAMES
ODEON	DRIVEN
ODEON-2	ALONG CAME SPIDER
ROBEN	AMORSEKO
TANDEM-1	ONE NIGHT AT MC COOL'S
TANDEM-2	PANINDA
TIMES	15 MIUTES / ATTACK FORCE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	AMORSEKO
QUEZON-1	AMORSEKO
REMAR	AMORSEKO
REMAR-2	PANINDA
CUBAO	
OCEAN SUPERAMA	BABAENG PUTIK
OCEAN CINEMA-A	PANABLA
OCEAN CINEMA-B	CRISELDA
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	DR. DO LITTLE 2
CINEMA-2	FINAL FANTASY
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MILA
CINEMA-2	ACCIDENTAL SPY
CINEMA-3	AMORSEKO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	TOMB RAIDER
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	DUNGEONS & DRAGONS
CINEMA-6	ONSEHAN
CINEMA-7	PANINDA
CINEMA-8	ATLANTIS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	DR. DO LITTLE 2
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	DRIVEN
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	FINAL FANTASY
CINEMA-12	ALONG CAME SPIDER
CINEMA-14	SWORDFISH
CINEMA-15	PANGAKO, IKAW LANG
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	ATLANTIS
CINEMA-2	ALONG CAME A SPIDER
CINEMA-3	DR. DO LITTLE 2
CINEMA-4	FINAL FANTASY
CINEMA-5	DRIVEN
CINEMA-6	SWORD FISH
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-1	SPOT
CINEMA-2	COLLEGE GIRL
CINEMA-4	MULATA
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	TOO MUCH FLESH
CINEMA-2	VALENTINE
CINEMA-4	UHAW NA HAYOP

Joey Albert comes home

JOEY Albert is coming home for a series of performances at the Captain's Bar, Mandarin Oriental on July 28 and Aug. 4.

Presented by Incus Productions and ALV Productions, with the Hongkong Shanghai Banking Corporation, Web Empire and Cerveza Negra, the concert, dubbed "Joey Albert . . . Once More," will again showcase her catalog of endearing ballads and rearranged classics from her "Lookin' Back" album.

Special guest is young heartthrob Jeffrey Hidalgo, with Gerard Salonga as musical director.

Joey recently drew a mammoth crowd when she staged her "Larger Than Life" concert at the legendary Orpheum Theater in Vancouver, Canada, where she is now based with her husband Ting Pacis.

Her Vancouver gig was also highlighted by the special performances of two of her former collegues in the Philippine music industry: multi-awarded pop artist Ray-An Fuentes and piano wizard Joselito Pascual.

"Joey Albert . . . Once More" is also sponsored by Alberto Shoes and www.musiko.com.

Tickets are available at Mandarin Oriental (750-8888), Incus Productions (637-1836/37), ALV Productions (637-7017/914-2933) and all Tower Records outlets.

Last call for RX 'Band Breakout'

DEADLINE for the application period of the "RX Band Breakout 2001" is July 17.

Entries must include a profile of the band and a CD or cassette recording of at least two songs by the band, one of them an original.

Bands must be unsigned and comprise of at least three members, two of them instrument players.

After the application period, "Band Breakout" judges will select the finalists who will be played on RX 93.1 and get a chance to perform at Hard Rock Café Makati on the "RX Band Breakout 2001" showcases.

At stake is the grand prize of P50,000 cash and a recording contract from Alpha Records.

Applications are accepted at the RX 93.1 office on the 17/F of Strata 2000 in Ortigas Center.

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James Woods
Ving Rhames
Steve Buscemi
Donald Sutherland
July 16 - Mon. / 17 - Tues.
6:20 PM - Final Fantasy
8:40 PM - Final Fantasy
11:00 PM - Final Fantasy
UPCOMING MOVIES AT LOUIE'S THX:
JURASIC PARK III
Bridgit Jones Diary
Moulin Rouge
Hear the Difference, Feel the Excitement

ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Mail call

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LET'S catch up on feedback from some of our readers: **Jaja Amper** of Makati City writes, "Congratulations for having such an informative and widely-read column. The fresh show biz news and reviews you regularly dish out never fail to excite and amuse us. Keep on the good work.

"We would like to congratulate Star Cinema for the success of 'Mila.' The studio's efforts to gamble on non-commercial projects like 'Tanging Yaman' and 'Mila' deserve accolades. They make the already huffing and puffing movie industry breathe—and how! . . . It's inspiring to see people lining up to watch a film that pays tribute to teachers like us . . . !"

For his part, Capricorndoc writes: "Your article on **Ishmael Bernal** brought back good memories. I truly enjoyed the films of this great director. The article inspired me to start a collection of works by our best Filipino directors. Please give me the names of stores that sell videotapes of movies by Bernal, Brocka and Castillo. I appreciate your assistance."

NUT: Some of our film-buff friends comb through the tapes at the video stores in the Virra Mall area, while others try their luck at the branches of the big video chains, hoping to discover the occasional hidden gem.

They also scour the programming schedules of our local movie channels and tape the films they need for their personal viewing. Once in a while, a collector decides to sell some of his tapes of film classics, so watch out for announcements of video garage sales as well.

Finally, **Vivian R. Cepeda** of Quezon City, writes, "I want to become a film director but I can't afford to study in a film school. How can I learn about directing without formal studies? I believe there have been some famous directors who aren't graduates of a film school, so I want to know how they learned . . ."

NUT: If you can't study film formally, you have to find ways to learn about it on your own, through reading, viewing and analyzing. Film books can be found in libraries, while movie channels on cable TV offer some examples of excellent filmmaking.

In addition, prospective directors need to learn film language hands-on by borrowing a small camera shooting some film or video footage, working with sound, and doing some editing.

Other skills needed by feature-film directors:

Analyzing scripts, determining the right style for a specific script, working creatively with actors, and audience psychology.

How do you learn all this without going to school? Working in theater and on TV can help. Even if you work as a "lowly" P.A., if you're observant and determined, you can learn a lot.

Even better, get an established director to agree to accept you as a trainee or gofer, and learn by osmosis from him.

Keep those letters coming, folks!

Goldwynisms

SAMUEL **Goldwyn**, the legendary film producer and movie mogul, was known for his films—but he was more "famous" for his unintentionally hilarious malapropisms and abuses of the English language. Some classic "Goldwynisms":

"I've been sick with intentional flu."

"I can answer you in two words: in possible!"

"Our comedies are not to be laughed at."

"I'll write you a blanket check."

"I don't think anybody should write his autobiography until after he's dead."

"A verbal contract isn't worth the paper it's written on."

"That's the trouble with directors—always biting the hand that lays the golden eggs!"

"I want to go where the hand of man has never set foot!"

"Gentlemen, do not underestimate the danger of the atom bomb: it's dynamite!"

"You are partly one hundred percent right!"

"He's living beyond his means, but he can afford it."

"I hate directors with huge artistic egos. I would rather deal with a smart idiot than with a stupid genius!

"I'm going out for some tea and trumpets."

"You need Indians? You can get them right from the reservoir!"

"I can't make it to your place for dinner, but I hope you'll give me a raincoat!"

"We've passed a lot of water since then."

"I love the ground I walk on."

"Include me out!"

TV notes

ON Viva Cinema, comedians **Andrew E., Janno Gibbs** and **Dennis Padilla** explode in the riotous film, "Mokong, Astig and Gamol," July 17, Tuesday, 8 p.m. Also stars **John Regala** and **Rufa Mae Quinto**.

Sharon Cuneta and **Lorna Tolentino** shate stellar billing in the riveting drama, "Nakagapos na Puso," July 18, 8 p.m., with **Edu Manzano** and **Tonton Gutierrez**.

On Star Movies, **Claire Danes, Giovanni Ribisi** and **Omar Epps** face unbeatable odds in the crime-fighting flick, "The Mod Squad," Saturday, July 21, 9 p.m.

Will Smith becomes the target of a powerful government agency in "Enemy of the State," Sunday, July 22, 9 p.m.

Arnold Schwarzenegger must defeat a seemingly invincible foe in order to save a young boy's life and stop a future controlled by machines in "Terminator 2," with **Robert Patrick** as the T-1000 robot and **Edward Furlong** as John Connor.

Tulfo returns to TV, this time without the 'bad words'

BY LEAH SALTERIO

WHEN the public service program "Isumbong Mo Kay Tulfo" went off the air early last year, RPN 9 was swamped with calls from viewers asking why. INQUIRER columnist and "Isumbong" host Ramon Tulfo, who was then producing it himself, said the show had to stop airing due to financial constraints.

The requests to return the show just kept on coming from viewers who cheered on when the program shook up abusers of power, exposed anomalies and helped victims of injustice.

After more than a year off the air, "Isumbong Mo Kay Tulfo" returns Saturdays starting July 21, 5 to 6 p.m. This time it is produced by RPN 9.

Tulfo says the new version will not just be a mere helping line or venue for airing grievances but will have a more pro-active approach to public service.

"Most of those who come to us for help are in dire straits," Tulfo offers. "We're like the court of last resort. But fortunately, we are able to provide solutions to most of their problems."

The program does not simply help by giving referrals. "We go with the complainants to the respective agencies and help them with their problems," Tulfo says. "Those who are victims of government bureaucracy in agencies like the SSS or Pag-ibig, we try to find out what's wrong and how these things can be avoided. In most cases, we get immediate results."

Efficient staff

Tulfo credits his efficient, all-female staff who works on the people's complaints. When his staff encounters resistance, Tulfo comes in and works on the case himself. So far, government officials have not turned him down.

"Most of the time, I try to get an appointment, but when I feel the official is hiding from us, I barge into the office with the complainant and insist that the official attend to us."

It helps that Tulfo has a formidable media background as a hard-hitting columnist.

"A big part of this image is a result of my being a columnist of a big newspaper like the INQUIRER," he says. "In this line of work, TV and print complement each other."

Tulfo expects the new show to make a difference to small people.

"It's like a story of two men walking along the beach and scattered along the seashore are thousands of starfish," he relates. "As they walk, one guy keeps on throwing starfish back to the sea, which prompted his friend to ask, 'What are you doing?' He said, 'I'm throwing back the starfish to the sea.'

"Then the other guy counters, 'But there are thousands of starfish?' The first guy reasons out, 'It makes a difference to the starfish that I throw back.' I'd like to believe I make a difference to the lives of all the people I help with my program."

"Isumbong" avoids labor problems, family feuds, requests for financial aid and land disputes.

"If a complainant comes to us with a labor problem, we give him a referral letter, so his effort of coming to us will not be wasted."

During the one-year lull, Tulfo concentrated on radio, where "Isumbong Mo Kay Tulfo" airs Monday to Friday on dwIZ.

"I cannot give up this program because this gives me good karma," Tulfo explains. "I help people in need without expecting anything in return."

Bite remains

"Isumbong Mo Kay Tulfo" has been on radio for a decade now. It started on Radio Veritas, where it was the flagship program of the station.

On RPN 9, where it aired for four years, "Isumbong Mo Kay Tulfo" won the Philippine Movie Press Club (PMPC) Star Awards for TV as best public service program and best public service host.

His initial TV venture, however, saw Tulfo often at odds with advertisers and censors, who criticized him for hurling invectives on the air.

"There were advertisers who wouldn't support me because they didn't want to hear me cursing," Tulfo admits.

But he vows to be "wholesome" this time.

"The bite and anger will still be there, but there'll be no more bad words."

He signed a one-season (13 episodes) contract with RPN 9 for "Isumbong Mo Kay Tulfo."

"I want this show to be popular so I can help even the people in the provinces, where I can set up offices to attend to the local complaints. I want it to be a daily show and I want it to become a by-word for people who need help."

New segments

"Isumbong Mo Kay Tulfo" introduces new segments. Each episode features one or two resolved cases, while some complaints will be brought before President Macapagal-Arroyo in the segment "Magsumbong Kay Ate Glo," which aims to bring Ms Macapagal closer to the people.

"We can't solve problems like graft and corruption which is so rampant," Tulfo explains. "Problems that require solutions that will benefit a large number of people should be presented to the president."

Segments like "Raket," "Sumbong," "Motibo at Anggulo" and "Karapatan ni Juan" will expose anomalies and help victims of injustice.

"Bayan ng mga Bayani" honors ordinary men and women doing exemplary deeds to help others.

Tulfo is the eldest of the 10 children of a former Philippine Military Academy (PMA) graduate, Ramon Tulfo Sr., who later worked for the Philippine Constabulary.

"When I was younger, my ambition was to be a military officer like my dad," Tulfo recalls. "But I was a disappointment to my dad when I failed the PMA entrance exam three times. I was poor in math. But I realized it was not the end of the world. I know my dad would have been proud of me now three times over."

Big brother

Tulfo's younger brothers, Raffy and Erwin, followed in his footsteps and have also carved their own names in media.

"My brothers are not copycats. I may have influenced them largely in their career and I may have paved the way for them in media, but they did not consciously imitate me.

"We took after our dad, especially in our military bearing, although Raffy is a slouch. If my dad were still alive, he would have kicked Raffy. We are all hot-headed and emotional. They look up to me as a surrogate father because I'm the eldest.

"Dealing with crime and criminals are nothing new to us. One of the qualities of a Tulfo is that he cannot just stand on the side while somebody gets beaten up. When I was younger, I would pick up fights trying to defend other boys."

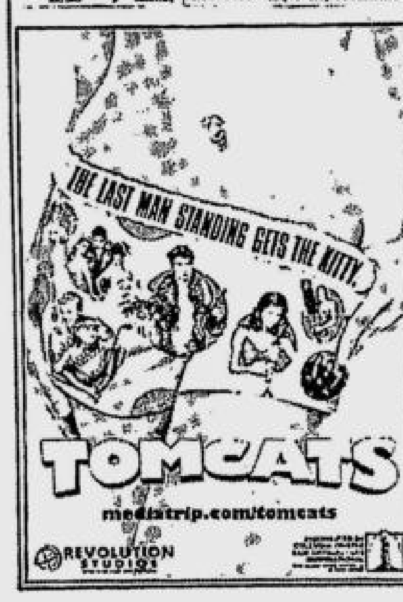
The fearless Tulfo confesses he has his fears.

"I know one day, somehow, someone might just try to swipe away at me. But it comes with the territory. My courage comes from knowing that I'm doing a good job and I'm doing it for many people."

TULFO. Dealing with crime and criminals are nothing new to him.

TV/RADIO and print journalist Ramon Tulfo signs a new contract with RPN 9 for "Isumbong Mo Kay Tulfo." In photo are: (seated from left) Cencio de la Cruz, sales manager of RPN 9; Tulfo and Baby Linao, assistant general manager of RPN 9; (standing from left) Vic de Echo, Gina Virtusio of WG&A Super Ferry, Tessie Mora, Mario Hernandez and Edith del Rosario.

PHOTOS BY RANDY HORMILLOSA



MTRCB RATING ▶ R Strictly for ADULTS No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted

Sexy, wacky comedy opens July 18

Introducing, the "Tomcats," tropa ng free-wheeling, sex-obsessed guys, na walang inatupag kung hindi maka-iskor at magbilang ng nobya.

Nagpustahan ang barkada – sino ang huling barako na di patatali sa pag-aasawa?

Matapos ang ilang taon, sina Michael (Jerry O'Connell ng JERRY MAGUIRE) at Kyle (Jake Busey ng STARSHIP TROOPERS) na lang ang natitirang bachelor sa grupo.

Upang manalo sa pusta, ise-set up ni Mike si Kyle with super-seductive Natalie (Shannon Elizabeth ng SCARY MOVIE, AMERICAN PIE). Nguni't di niya inaasahan na mailinlab din pala siya sa sexing dalaga. Manalo man siya sa pusta, maglalaho naman ang true love niya!

Silipin din sa hilarious sexy comedy from Columbia Pictures sina Playboy playmates Julia Schultz at Amber Smith. Rated R.

THE LAST MAN STANDING GETS THE KITTY.
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mediatrip.com/tomcats
REVOLUTION STUDIOS

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From the Critically Acclaimed Director of "CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON"

RIDE WITH THE DEVIL
A Film by ANG LEE

IN A NO-MAN'S LAND BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH, YOU DIDN'T FIGHT FOR THE BLUE OR THE GRAY... YOU FOUGHT FOR YOUR FRIENDS AND YOUR FAMILY.

SKEET ULRICH TOBEY MAGUIRE JEFFREY WRIGHT

Ang Lee ("The Ice Storm," "Sense and Sensibility" & Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon") once again takes audiences on a journey to a different time and place, and into his characters' internal conflicts. A cast of rising young stars portrays young Americans, striving to define themselves and the country they had always called home, amidst national turmoil. The screenplay for Ride with the Devil is adapted (by Lee's longtime collaborator, James Schamus) from Daniel Woodrell's novel Woe to Live On.

RIDE WITH THE DEVIL

ONE CHIP IS ABOUT TO IGNITE A GLOBAL WAR ON JULY 18, WEDNESDAY!

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FINAL FANTASY - P 13 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50	DRIVEN - P 13 12:10, 2:35, 5:00, 7:25, 9:50	SWORD FISH - R 18 11:40, 1:40, 3:40, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00

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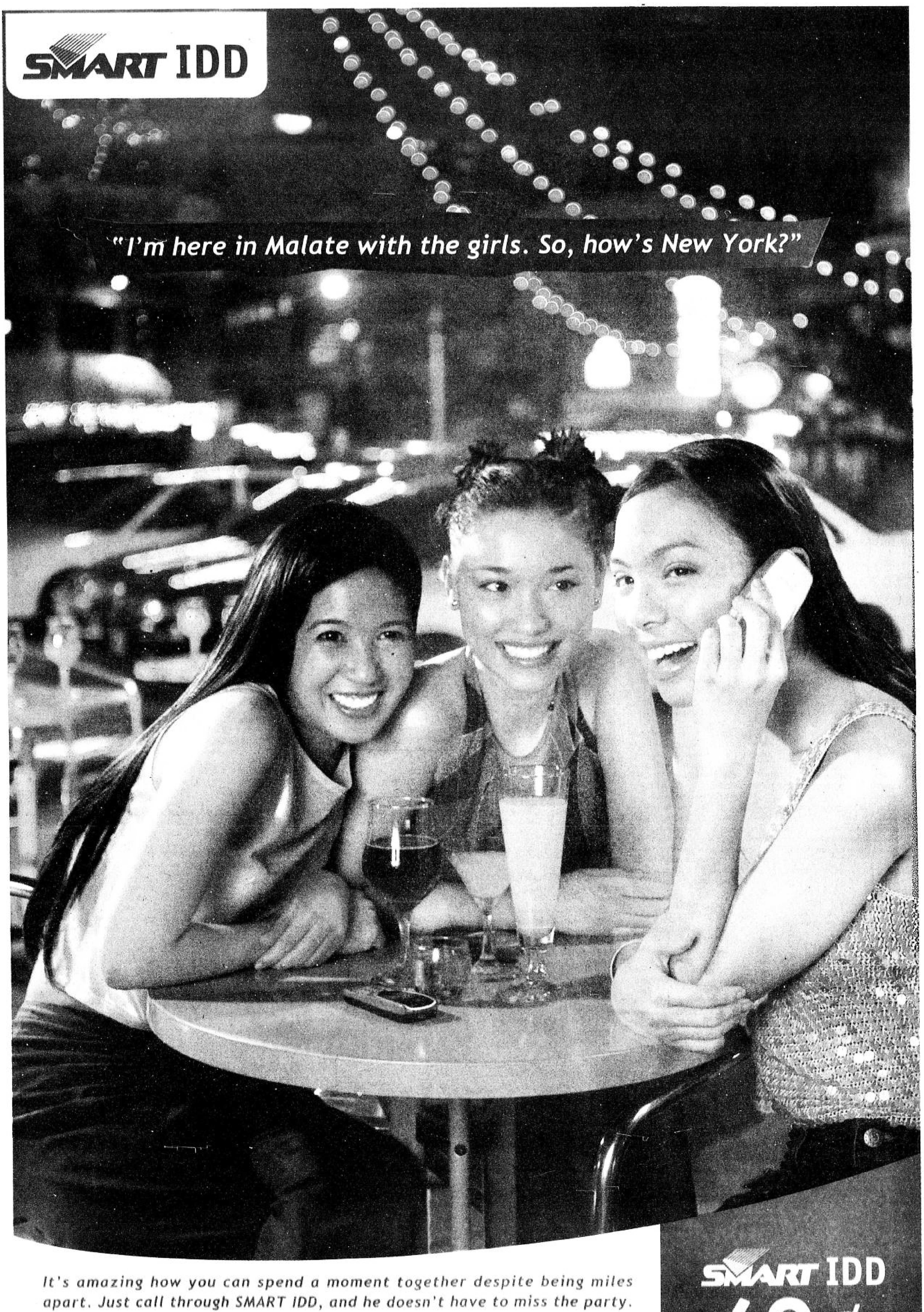
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2001 budget deficit seen hitting ₱180B

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

LEFT with no room to generate more revenues, the Macapagal administration is considering to raise its budget deficit target this year to P180 billion, or 24 percent more than its P145-billion target.

A government source said the economic team was now finalizing the higher deficit level after realizing that the economic recovery it was counting on to help reduce the budget gap would not happen this year.

The Macapagal administration originally looked at a deficit target of between P170 billion and P225 billion. This was reduced to P145 billion because of what the government had thought were promising prospects for a recovery that should boost collections of the bureaus of internal revenue and of customs and even allow the sale of state-owned assets.

But instead of focusing on efforts to restart the economy, the government is now preoccupied with resolving the Abu Sayyaf hostage crisis in Mindanao and improving the peace-and-order situation in the metropolis.

These military operations according to a government source, was proving to be costly and was already eating up into the budget.

"The P10 billion in savings from expenditures in the first four months of the year could not be replicated in the second half. I don't think there is any room for any budget cuts now," another ranking government source said.

With spending already tight and earnings falling short, particularly from the BIR, the government has no other choice but to adjust its budget deficit target upward.

The inter-agency Development Budget Coordinating Council was scheduled to decide in a meeting two weeks ago whether or not to revise the government's deficit target and consequently allow the BIR to downgrade its collection target by P5 billion.

"We decided to defer any decision on the deficit and the BIR targets until we have resolved some issues on the assumptions that were used as basis for the targets," Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said in an earlier interview.

The finance chief said the inter-agency team would firm up the deficit and BIR targets within the third quarter.

The DBCC counts as its members the officials of the departments of finance and budget, the Bureau of Treasury, the National Economic and Development Authority and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

A review of the deficit target this year as well as next year's P120-billion budget gap projection was brought up by the economic team after the deficit as of May ballooned to P58.33 billion from P28.1 billion in the first four months of the year.

The deficit in May alone reached P30.25 billion or 28.8 percent more than the P23.49-billion target for the month. The May deficit was bigger than the combined deficit from January to April.

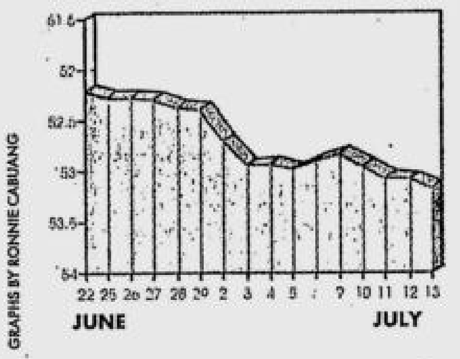
From January to May, revenues of P229.75 billion still fell short of the P236.02-billion target while

2001/ B3

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



Peso-Dollar Rate

₱53.17 = $1
As of 5 p.m., July 13, 2001

¥124.08 = $1
The US dollar was trading at 124.08 as of 5 p.m., July 13, 2001

GOLD:$266.60/267.10
per ounce Hong Kong, July 13, 2001

STOCK MARKET

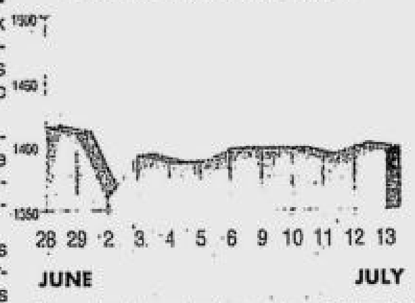
Weak trading seen

STOCK trading is expected to remain weak this week in the absence of positive news on the political and economic fronts.

Analysts said they expect investors to remain sidelined by the protracted Abu Sayyaf hostage crisis and gloomy economic prospects both here and abroad.

A technical rally is possible as bargain-hunters accumulate favorite blue chips and second-liners trading at attractive prices.

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B4)

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Banking sector's bad loans, non-performing assets up

By CLARISSA S. BATINO

THE BANKING system's non-performing loans ratio continued to worsen in May to 16.81 percent of their total loan portfolio from 16.76 percent a month ago, data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed.

The banks' loan portfolio stayed flat at P1.576 trillion during the month, while bad loans inched up to P264.96 billion from P264.17 billion in April.

BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said the central bank had revised the April NPL ratio from the earlier reported level of 16.65 percent to 16.76 percent because some banks submitted their figures late.

Non-performing loans refer to accounts whose principal or interest remained unpaid 90 days or more after due date.

Reyes said he expected the banks' bad loan ratio to slightly improve in June as lenders pursued a more aggressive lending program particularly to the manufacturing sector.

In previous months, he said, the improved loans to manufacturing sector had pushed loan growth to 6.5 percent.

A bank source, however, said that any improvement in the bad loan ratio in June might only be cosmetic as many banks tend to window-dress their balance sheets to reflect a better performance for end-semester reports.

The level of the banks' real and other properties owned or acquired or Ropoa likewise increased by 1.32 percent to P137.5 billion in May from P135.7 billion the previous month. The banks' Ropoa or foreclosed assets rose as their non-performing assets ratio increased to 13.4 percent in May from 13.3 percent a month ago.

The BSP official pointed out that despite their worsening loan portfolio, banks' had earmarked sufficient provisioning for the bad loans. In May, the banks' coverage ratio went up to 44.2 percent of total loans from 42.7 percent the previous month.

"Borrowers are still having a hard time paying their loans. And the economy has not fully recovered yet so loan growth has not picked up," said Reyes.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas admitted that if interbank loans were to be taken out the banks' total loan portfolio, the ratio of bad loans would have been higher at 18.4 percent in May from 18.23 percent in April.

Reyes said loan growth was expected to accelerate once the political situation in the country normalizes. The Macapagal administration, he said, was serious in pursuing economic and political reforms.

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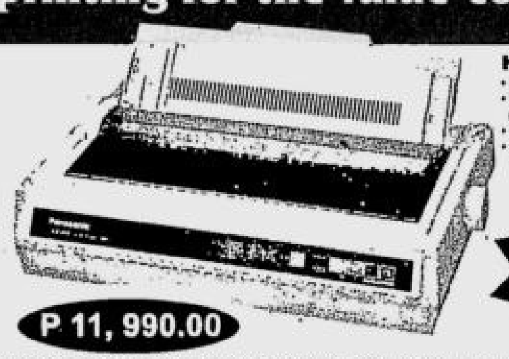

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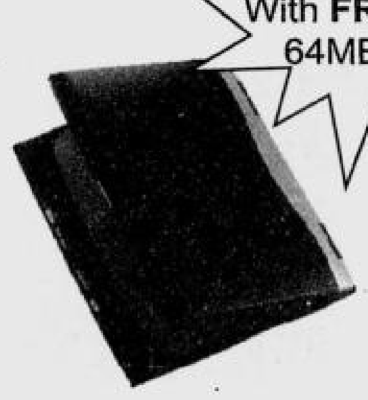

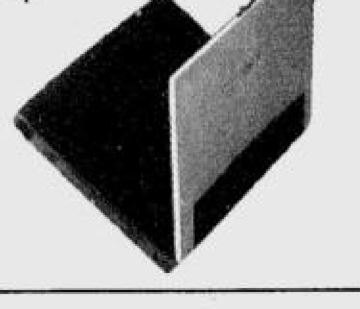

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Tackling poverty through SMEs and microfinance

MINDANAO ONE

Larry N. Digal

TODAY, the Davao SME Development Council is opening its third annual conference on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and their pivotal role in alleviating poverty in Mindanao.

Based solely on income levels, the Philippines has a higher incidence of poverty than neighboring Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and China. Of the 20 poorest provinces in the Philippines, 14 are in Mindanao. The average poverty incidence in the region is 57 percent, more than 10 percent above the national average. The ARMM has the highest incidence of all at 65 percent.

This is what has become known as the "second Mindanao," a far cry from the bustling urban centers like Davao, Cagayan de Oro and General Santos. This is the Mindanao that rates most dismally on the human development index.

Much of this can be traced to a clutch of long-unresolved, interconnected problems: low investment, weak governance, poverty and underdevelopment, which together have led to intermittent armed conflict in some areas, and which in turn have been aggravated by that conflict.

Mindanao stakeholders realize that there is no magic cure-all for this complex predicament, but they do agree that tackling poverty is vital. From the point of view of the private sector, two concrete strategies that should prove crucial in solving the issue of poverty and inequality are SME development and microfinancing.

Some 99 percent of total registered enterprises in the country are SMEs. They employ more than 50 percent of the country's labor force and account for about 25 percent of the country's value added. In Mindanao, analysts estimate that there are approximately 200 large-scale enterprises—and over 100,000 SMEs.

The private sector has long been the main engine for growth in Mindanao, and ensuring that SMEs have an environment in which to develop and expand should be high on the list of government priorities. SMEs need far-sighted government policies that would decrease the cost of doing business and ensure competitiveness.

The formulation of the Magna Carta for SME Development (RA 6977 of 1991 revised/replaced by RA8289 in 1996) was just an initial step in helping accelerate the growth of SMEs to reduce poverty. The plan focuses on priority sectors, promotes mutually beneficial linkages between small and large firms and is aimed at strengthening technology and R & D initiatives.

Most important of all, the Magna Carta seeks to improve SMEs' access to financing. It provides for the development of innovative financing mechanisms, such as the use of non-traditional sources (e.g. cooperatives, associations) and schemes (e.g. equity financing through venture capital).

SMEs find it extremely difficult to access financing due to their limited track record, lack of assets acceptable as collateral and lack of financial statements or other documents acceptable to the creditor. It is this problem of inaccessibility that bears the fruit of inequity.

Also, among financial institutions, there is little venture capital and few long-term or equity funds that would suit the long-gestating nature of new businesses. This is coupled with a perception that SMEs are a high-risk proposition—particularly when they are located in Mindanao. Even SMEs in the most economically and politically stable areas of the region are subjected to this prejudice.

By early 2000, as armed conflict between government forces and the MILF escalated, bank policies on lending in Mindanao grew even more stringent. The remaining borrowers were required to reduce credit lines based on re-evaluated collateral values (much less than values previously appraised by the banks), or to substitute existing collateral in areas perceived as hot spots, with the new collateral located in urban centers—outside Mindanao.

In 1997, the combined loan portfolios of Mindanao banks topped P76 million; by 2000 this had dropped by a third, to just over P52 million. The loan-to-deposit ratio, which reached 97 percent in 1997, has fallen to 53 percent, another indication that even Mindanao banks have little faith in lending to businesses in their own region.

The exceptions have been the rural banks, including those engaged in microfinance.

This financing mechanism, defined as the provision of credit, savings and other financial services to the very poor, is the most strategic for addressing the problems of the smallest entrepreneurs.

The majority of the people in Mindanao, comprising approximately one-third of the country's poor households, do not have access to credit from most banks and financial institutions and are forced to draw on their savings, their relatives or their business profits to finance their businesses. Most micro-entrepreneurs source their financing from informal lenders who charge staggeringly high rates of interest.

The government and a growing community of financial institutions, such as cooperative rural banks, commercial banks and credit unions, have grasped the need for developing a healthy microfinance system.

There is in fact a national goal for microfinance: to provide access to microfinance services to over 2 million households belonging to the bottom 50 percent by 2005.

In Davao City, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is about to launch a lending program with accredited banks based on the Grameen model for microfinancing.

Plantersbank, in partnership with various European institutions, is setting up Mindanao's first microfinance bank.

Capabilities have to be built up in the areas of financial reporting and monitoring systems, risk assessment and management, product packaging, management of loan arrears, strategic business planning and the market-oriented pricing of financial products and services.

The Microenterprise Access to Banking Services in Mindanao Program of USAID has been providing capability-building services to rural banks across the region and plans to widen its reach in areas with large Muslim populations.

As we can see, both the microenterprise and the SME sectors, as well as their lending institutions, need capability building. Stating a common noble goal is not enough. There has to be concerted action and a systematic building-up of skills of both borrowers and lenders.

Within the larger framework, the government has to ensure that there is peace and security in Mindanao, and aggressively address investors' negative perception of the region. It also has to institute effective macroeconomic policies, build infrastructure, and help reduce the costs of shipping goods by sea and air. This will make it easier to do business in Mindanao and will guarantee the long-term health of the SME sector.

(Larry N. Digal, PhD, heads the policy team of the Mindanao Business Council and teaches at UP Mindanao.)

Ortigas seeks early resolution of ISMI issue

By DORIS C. DUMLAO

THE ORTIGAS family expressed hope that its deal with former Trade Minister Roberto Ongpin's group involving the sale of 40 percent of dormant mining firm Itogon-Suyoc Mines Inc. would push through despite some legal problems with the Philippine Stock Exchange.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Ortigas & Co. Ltd. president and ISMI director Rafael Ortigas said the family hoped that the PSE would come up with a resolution on the ISMI issue before the company's July 25 stockholders meeting. In that meeting, stockholders are expected to elect Ongpin as the new company chair.

ISMI earlier forged a memorandum of agreement to sell around 40 percent of its stake to Ongpin's Internet upstart Philweb.com Inc. at a par value of one centavo per share. This, however, is subject to the approval of the PSE and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Ortigas also stressed that the Ortigas family had nothing to do with the speculative plays in the stock market that had pushed up the share price of ISMI in recent months.

"Our conscience is clear. They can look into our books and see if there was any buying or selling of shares," Ortigas said, noting that there were only a few people even in his own group who knew about the discussions with Ongpin.

The PSE is currently investigating a possible case of insider trading behind the phenomenal rise of the ISMI share price, which rose by more than five times in the first semester of the year prior to the announcement of the buy-in deal with Philweb.

Insider trading refers to the use of advanced information about a listed company in order to accumulate profits. An insider could be a shareholder, director, manager, creditor, investment banker, potential business partner or any stakeholder in the listed company being traded.

Ortigas said ISMI would benefit from a buy-in deal with Philweb as this would give the dormant mining firm a fresh direction.

ISMI president Alberto Montilla said: "We hope that they would take a look at the merit of the case. Definitely, the mining business is now in the backseat and we can't do anything about it. You can do a lot of exploration but who will finance it?"

He explained that the Ortigas family had already advanced a lot of money to ISMI and even converted a big portion of these into equity. He said that after converting P120 million in advances into equity, the company was still left with P360 million in debts.

RFM seen to announce Cosmos buyer this week

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE BIDDING war between San Miguel Corp./The Coca-Cola Co. and Pepsico Inc. for Cosmos Bottling Corp. comes to a head with RFM Corp., majority owner of the coveted bottler of Sarsi and Pop Cola, to announce its choice this week.

A source privy to the top-level discussions said the Concepcion-controlled RFM was currently reviewing the separate offers of both San Miguel-Coke and Pepsico for its 85-percent stake in Cosmos.

"RFM is keen on making a decision soon, most probably within the week, in order to focus more on resolving its financing problems. It can't afford to wait too long because of the uncertain economic conditions and interest in the company might not stay that long," the source said.

RFM's asking price for Cosmos is P16 billion or roughly $300 million, more than enough to meet its pressing financial obligations, particularly to investors of its $65 million in convertible bond.

San Miguel-Coke has initially offered P12 billion for control of Cosmos and later raised its bid, reportedly to P14.5 billion, after fierce rival Pepsico signified strong interest in the company.

Pepsico had earlier offered a joint venture deal with RFM to run Cosmos but it has since changed tactics and chose to make a bid for a buyout with the backing of the Carlyle Group, a Washington-based investment firm specializing in corporate mergers and acquisitions.

San Miguel-Coke believes that Cosmos is the final piece in its bid to capture the Philippine market, the world's 8th biggest market for cola beverages. San Miguel-Coke is the Philippines' leading bottler with a 60- to 65-percent market share but number 2 Cosmos, which has a 25-percent market share, is its biggest barrier to dominating the market anew.

Industry sources said that Coke and Pepsi have not been able to raise their prices in the last few years because of Cosmos' effective marketing and distribution of the low-priced Sarsi and Pop.

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Polo's fall

COCKTALES

By Victor C. Agustin

THE MANILA Polo Club has fallen into its own version of the Asian financial crisis, resulting in the forced resignation of its polo-playing playboy president, Antonio M. Garcia, one month short of next month's elections.

In a letter mailed to members last week, new Polo Club president Policarpio Ascalon said the board belatedly discovered that instead of the P65.3-million profit reported by Garcia in March, the club had actually sustained a loss of P25.3 million as of May 31.

Worse, the club was projected to have lost P36.5 million for the fiscal year ending last June 30, Ascalon added.

Garcia, chair of the publicly listed Reynolds Philippines that was recently penalized for insider trading, apparently used smoke-and-mirrors accounting to project a healthy balance sheet for the club.

As Ascalon put it: "The net bottom-line of P65.3 million for the seven-month period ended January 2001. . . was due to a special item, Associate Membership Assessments, amounting to P70.7 million."

In truth, "P63.3 million of this was actually collected the previous fiscal year but recognized as receipts this year."

Even worse, only P7.4 million were collected from associate members in the same period as against the P70.7 million that Garcia reported.

"As a result of this loss, the board decided to reorganize. President Antonio M. Garcia resigned, and the board accepted his resignation," Ascalon reported.

The employment contract of the general manager, Romeo G. David, "was not extended" when it expired on July 6, he added.

In the meantime that a new GM has yet to be hired, member Filemon Juntereal Jr. was appointed "pro bono" officer-in-charge.

The board shake-up also resulted in Reynaldo Concepcion being elected first vice president, Harry Tan (a.k.a. the younger brother of taipan Lucio Tan) second vice president/treasurer, F[illegible] Nassr, assistant treasurer; and Ca[illegible]os Rufino, secretary.

To stanch the losses, the new board has decided "to shift the focus of former president Garcia on club building projects to that of club operations."

Instead of additional infrastructure, the new board will proceed with the suspended kitchen improvement project, improve revenues in all operating departments, and reduce wastage/pilferage, operating expenses and costs "due to low productivity (and) overtime work."

Despite its blue-chip membership, the Polo Club had been unable to cover its operating expenses from membership dues and patronage and instead, relied the past two years on lowering the membership barrier to allow more aspiring children of proprietary members the cache of becoming "associate" member in return for a P1-million entrance fee.

But judging from the diminishing returns, the club had already overfished even the descendants' pool.

Unless it dips further into its P189-million cash pool it had stashed in banks, the club, according to a few mischievous members, may have to resort to further opening its gate for *promdi* millionaires and the nouveaux riches to enter its hallowed grounds and be seen, however fleetingly, hobnobbing with the Zobels, Sorianos, Madrigals, Rufinos, Aranetas, Tuasons, Lopezes, Cojuangcos, and the rest of Manila's glamorous set.

Heard through the grapevine

INSTEAD of apologizing for the incomplete delivery of the wedding ensemble on the wedding day of the two corporate lawyers (Cocktales, July 4, 2001), the couturier in question even sent a collection letter for the P20,000 balance.

Upon their return from their US honeymoon, the new couple (one from Romulo Mabanta and another from Sycip Salazar) were so incensed to see the collection letter waiting for them that they have now decided to make good their threat to sue.

The couturier? Paolo Basa.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

2001 budget . . .

(From page B1)

spending remained under control at P288.07 billion against the five-month target of P297.78 billion.

Camacho said the government had to look closely at factors affecting the deficit, particularly the BIR collections, which account for more than two-thirds of total government earnings.

"It's getting more and more difficult to achieve the full-year target given the economic slowdown," the finance chief admitted earlier.

Much of the shortfall in the five-month earnings came from the internal revenue and part of the reason could be the softer corporate earnings caused by a slower economic growth, Camacho explained.

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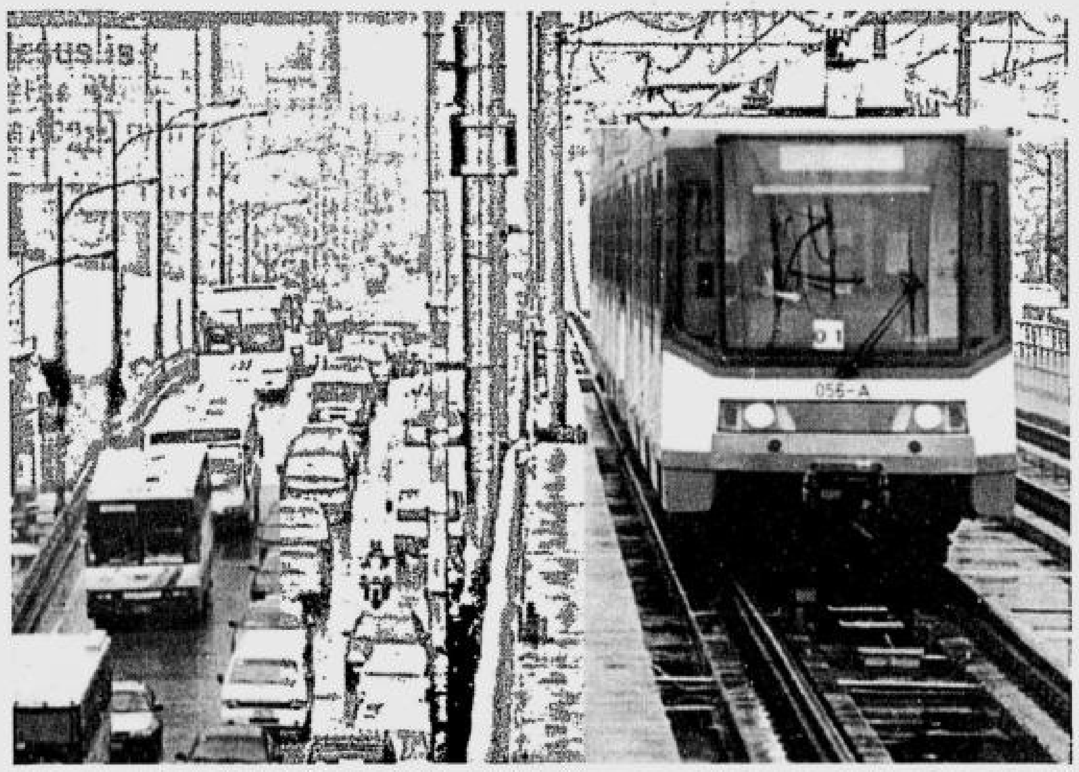

A METRO Rail coach glides along Edsa. Due to government-guaranteed loans, taxpayers who aren't even riding these coaches are ending up paying for the fare anyway. And traffic is still congested along Edsa.

Debt squeeze a Ramos 'legacy'

By Clarissa S. Batino

(First of two parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

IF ousted President Estrada was the movie star who became a villain towards the end of his aborted term, his predecessor was—in the eyes of many—a hero and a kingmaker. Former President Fidel Ramos, after all, was the leader who gave the country unprecedented growth and a budget surplus and brought it back to the radar screens of investors.

The Ramos administration was welcomed by eight-hour rotating brownouts and a lot of mistrust. A key figure during the Marcos dictatorship, Ramos started to win the public's confidence only after he solved the power crisis he inherited from the Aquino administration.

Before his term ended, Ramos made sure he would leave legacies behind, including a railway system designed to ease traffic along Epifanio de los Santos Ave., Metro Manila's main thoroughfare. These "legacies", however, are now giving the government a lot of headaches.

"These problems compounding the deficit now were approved during the time of Ramos and liabilities from guarantees given during his time have started ballooning already," a senior Department of Finance official, who asked that he not be named, told the INQUIRER

Lavished with guarantees

Most of Ramos' infrastructure projects, especially the power and the Metro Rail Transit Corp's Edsa railway system, were lavished with sovereign concessions, another finance official attested.

The government usually agrees to guarantee projects identified by a particular agency as critical and those that carry risks posed by political, regulatory and right-of-way problems.

A guarantee serves as an assurance to creditors that the government will assume liabilities that its contractors will be unable to pay. Whether it is settled or passed on to the state, the loan is considered a "contingent liability" and included in the computation of the consolidated public sector deficit.

Data from the finance department show that the government's contingent liabilities in 60 power projects, 24 transport projects, three water projects and 11 minor undertakings stands at $62.58 billion and may balloon to P3.129 trillion in the next 20 years.

A DOF official explains that contingent liabilities are computed based on the total cost of the loan or the amount guaranteed by the government, but only a small portion should become actual debts.

A case in point was some $4.34 billion, or P217 billion, in contingent liabilities this year, of which only P12.03 billion had become actual debts. While only 5.5 percent had become actual debts, these liabilities already comprised 8.3 percent of the government's projected P145-billion deficit this year. Former Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo said out of P12.03 billion in maturing liabilities that had to be paid this year, P10.38 billion were already included in the projected budget deficit.

Big-ticket items

Two big-ticket items in the list of maturing sovereign-backed obligations this year were power projects. The San Roque multi-purpose hydroelectric and irrigation project accounted for P2.949 billion of the total followed by the Casecnan hydroelectric project, with a maturing P1.685 billion in loans this year. Both projects were guaranteed by the Ramos administration.

The National Electrification Authority accounted for P860 million of the total, while the Philippine National Railways and Light Railway Transit Authority made up P491 million and P367 million.

The biggest item in the list was the sovereign-backed debts of Metro Rail Transit. Out of some P3.43 billion worth of debts incurred by the Metro Rail consortium that the government had to pay, around P1.08 billion represented interest payments alone. The consortium is led by Fil-Estate Management Inc., a company owned by property developer Robert Sobrepeña, a golfing buddy of former President Ramos. The government was forced to pay these debts because the returns that Metro Rail Transit was counting to pay them did not materialize because of risks that the Ramos administration said would not happen.

Take-or-pay deals

A guarantee also revolves around items like a "take-or-pay arrangement" in the case of power projects undertaken by the so-called independent power producers, or IPPs.

These IPPs were private companies that Napocor had to tap to build power plants at the height of a crippling power crisis in the late '80s and early '90s. To entice these companies to build quick-gestating but costly plants, the Napocor assured them that it would buy their output over a certain period of time.

A take-or-pay arrangement committed the government into buying 75 to 80 percent of the electricity that each IPP would produce. Such an arrangement, in turn, would enable the IPPs to pay their creditors.

The problem with this arrangement is that the government is now bound to pay these IPPs even though it no longer needs the electricity they are producing. The government apparently overestimated the extent of the power crisis and failed to anticipate that by 1994, the country would already have adequate supply of electricity.

Contractors for the 700-megawatt Pagbilao power plant and 1,200-megawatt Sual coal-fired power plant were still given a 75- to 85-percent take-or-pay guarantee although they started operating these facilities only in 1996 and 1999.

P600 billion in 20 years

Romulo said in the next 20 years, sovereign-backed loans would cost the government about P600 billion—even more—depending on conditions like economic growth. If the economy does well and contractors earn enough to pay on their own, then the government will not have to worry about paying debts it has guaranteed.

Analysts said, however, that with the economy hardly moving up, the government would continue to be saddled by debts it would have to assume, making it even more difficult for it to implement fiscal discipline and achieve a balanced budget in the coming years.

"We are deluged with liabilities from government guarantees that have become actual," Romulo said.

In the case of Metro Rail Transit, the government is paying for its loans because the projected number of people who will ride Metro Rail coaches in a day has not materialized. In a way, taxpayers who aren't even riding these coaches are ending up paying for the fare anyway. And traffic is still congested along Edsa.

(To be continued)

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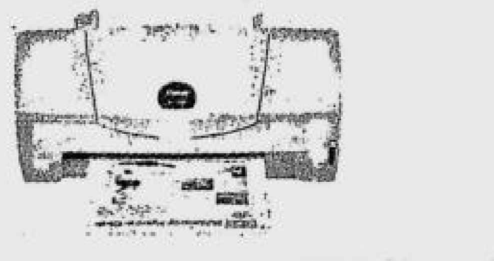

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Las Piñas

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Teresita J. Escudero
San Pedro Laguna
Enrico M. Ramirez
Kawit Cavite

Nokia 8250
Dougen Monterola / Lapu-Lapu City • Tita R. Almonte / Legaspi City • Maria P. Rendor / Quezon City • Filomeno A. Favis Jr. / Marikina City • Clemente D. Marcelo / Malolos Bulacan • Leo C. Yambot / Valensuela City • Rosano S. Abelardo / Quezon City

DRAW DATES WINNERS

1st WEEKLY DRAW (May 2) 15 Winners of Siemens M35

Carmelita M. Chua / Kalookan City • Mark Christopher L. Ilagan / Caridad, Cavite City • Princess Love P. Gabin / San Mateo Dasma, Cavite • Jose E. Porlaje Jr. / GMA, Cavite • Michelle R. Petines / Quezon City • Antonette Sarcia / San Miguel • Annie C. Lim / Cubao Q.C. • Ulyses H.C. Aguilar / Mabolo, Valenzuela City • Danny Flores / Proj 6 Q.C. • Diosdado A. Opena / BF Homes Parañaque • Jhonson Go / Novaliches Q.C. • FILEFIX Philippines c/o Mr. Allan Nicdao / Ayala Ave. Makati City • Robert C. Stenberg /Pasay City • Nikki Feliciano / BF Homes L.P. • Wilson Lee / Quezon City

2nd WEEKLY DRAW (May 9) 11 Winners of SIEMENS A36

Jesus M. Patasin / Hulo, Mandaluyong City • Fernando Hernandez / Makati City • Gemma Merin / Parañaque City • Normita D. Ayos / Indang, Cavite • Jon Kristiane Laqui / Imus, Cavite • Jose Mari DL Imao / Marikina Heights • Andrew C. Villasis / Proj. 8 Q.C. • Susan Azarcon / Sampaloc Manila • Angeline C. Balinong / Quezon City • Chito Navales / Fairview Q.C. • Cris Sarmiento / Quezon City

3rd WEEKLY DRAW (May 16) 17 Winners of NOKIA 5110i

Angela S. Medina / Cebu City • Arturo Estrella / Cebu City • Dennis Ian S. Violago / Marulas, Valenzuela City • Hilario O. Lulu / Angeles City, Pampanga • Joan Cabrera / Cebu City • Joy Consigna / Las Piñas City • M.S.Bunag Garments Inc. / Quezon City • Marie Ann Hubahib / Cebu City • Mark Dumol / Ermita, Manila • Marlon E. Ongray / Malabon Metro Manila • Paquito P. Mirasol / Cavite City • Ramonsito B. Vizconde / Calaca, Batangas • Ricardo Singcol Jr. / Cebu City • Rock R. Manuel / San Jose, Quezon City • Roquel Villamin / Talisay, Cebu • Simon T. Dailo / Singalong, Manila • Walter G. Navalta / Quezon City

4th WEEKLY DRAW (JUNE 13) 50 Winners of NOKIA 3310

Rosemarie Anne C. Julio / Las Piñas City • Lourdes Benelayo / Caloocan City • Cheryll A. Vergara / Tandang Sora Q.C. • Danilo M. Abayon / Pasig City • Jayvee Velasco / Pasig City • Edward L. Mendoza / AAV Muntinlupa City • Fidel T. Agnas Q.C. • Robert A. Bichara / Marikina City • Ariel Cua / Caloocan City • Richard Dalag / Bacoor, Cavite • Edzel R. Escala / Taytay, Rizal • Jose Oppus / Mandaluyong City • Eduardo Ramos / Cavite City • Jether Rojas / Quezon City • Francisco C. Mendoza / Cubao, Quezon City • Helendrito T. Morales / Antipolo City • Ma. Lourdes S. Torres / Marikina City • Leo V. Loja / Molino Bacoor, Cavite City • Darwin R. Verdis / Las Piñas City • Jay Louis H. Legaspi / Muntinlupa Metro Manila • Eduardo Magadia / Manila Peninsula Hotel • Judith C. Sia / Tabaco City • Rosalynda Callagan / Tuguegarao City, Cagayan • Aljoannes G. Del Mindo / Sta. Cruz, Manila • Nelson M. Bernabe / SMH Quezon City • Chiqui Chin / Quezon City • Juliet Dizon / Metro Manila • Mauricio Kirby / Antipolo City • Abegail Moreno / Pasig City • John S. Noseñas / Sanville I Culiat Q.C. • Darell S. Palma / Proj. 7 Q.C. • Mercedes A. Parreño / Cainta, Rizal • Prospero Repollo / Quezon City • Regina M. San Perdro / Tinatords Manila • Martin Christopher P. Valeriano / Baguio City • Remedios L. Angeles / Valenzuela City • Genevieve N. Ebarvia / Libis Q.C. • Valentin Beubano Jr. / Novaliches Q.C. • Marie Cherie Tauyan / Novaliches, Caloocan City • Joel Quiao / Makati City • Rex Alexandre Dela Cruz / Paco Manila • Neil C. Marcos / Tondo Manila • Christian Lanot / Pasig City • Bestcap School / Camiling, Tarlac • Adelle Espaldon / Muntinlupa Metro Manila • Dindo C. Barbosa / Cubao Quezon City • Joel Ediszan / Nueva Ecija • Levi Eugenio / Valenzuela City • Ellenor A. Marasigan / Balintawak Q.C. • Mildred M. Uy Proj. 7 Q.C.

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Peso madness

ON THE MONEY

John Mangun

THE PHILIPPINE stock market traded within a narrow range last week, as prices ... oh, who cares. We have a much more serious problem to face that threatens the economic survival of every citizen of this country. I do not believe that I am exaggerating.

You know exactly that my concern is our currency trading above 53 to the US dollar. And more serious than the actual rate of the peso, is the movement of the currency in the last month. I said a few weeks ago that the depreciation of the peso could easily get out of control if the Bangko Sentral and the Macapagal administration did not take pro-active and proper measures. Unfortunately, I fear that the time may be very near when that happens.

If you recall, back in 1990, there were days that the peso was fluctuating as much as 10 percent in a single day. And these were times when there were strict currency controls and other measures to avoid capital flight. If that happens again, this economy will crash and burn.

Listening to our monetary officials talking about the movement of the currency can only lead one to believe either they are fooling themselves or that they are trying to fool everyone else. Two weeks ago I listened as I was told that the peso weakness was due to the infamous regional currency weakness. On that day, the Thailand baht went down the equivalent of four centavos. Our peso dropped by forty centavos. I think that perhaps we are the "regional currency weakness" that is causing their problem. Further, the statements of the Bangko Sentral are completely and embarrassingly false. These are the actual rates, the first number being the price on June 1, and the second as of last week. Indonesia—11,450/11,325 (+1 percent), Korea—1,285/1,310 (-2 percent), Thailand—45.41/45.58 (-0.3 percent), Taiwan—34.01/35.00 (-3 percent), Singapore—1.81/1.83 (-1 percent), Philippine peso—50.75/53.20 (-5 percent).

In addition, talking about regional currencies depreciating is simply not telling the full story.

The Taiwan dollar, the Korean won, and the Singapore dollar have dropped considerably over the last months.

But this is not the result of active market forces.

This is the result of their respective governments taking active action to price a currency at a level that is in their citizens' best economic interests. All these economies live and die based on export levels. With Singapore's exports dropping at a double-digit rate each month, the government is doing everything it can to weaken the currency to spur sales of their goods abroad. It is a temporary phenomenon to keep business open and jobs in place. And it has nothing to do with the value of our peso because in both the short and long terms, they are not our direct trade competitors.

I have been involved in the currency markets as early as 1980 and I witnessed something this past week that is unprecedented in my experience.

As much as we would like to believe foreign financial institutions, (and as much credibility as the local media gives to them) the analysis coming from foreign banks is as self-serving as possible. Every nation borrows money on the world market. Foreign banks market and sell that debt paper. If Kanobank has to raise a few hundred million dollars for some country, I guarantee their analyst's view of the country will never be quite as negative, either in content or tone, as it might otherwise. It is simply good business practice. When it comes to the currency of a nation, banks rarely talk about the potential for depreciation because they might want to do business with that government in the future.

Last week two major foreign players in the currency markets predicted the peso could fall to as much as 60 to the dollar. Unless you believe that these banks have only goodwill in their hearts and are trying to "help" the Philippines, there can be only one reason for their comments—they are speculating against the peso and are doing all they can to talk the currency down. One reason they care little about doing business with the government is because our fresh foreign debt borrowings are small in the international markets and they gain little from future business. But they can gain millions if the peso does go to 60. The Bangko Sentral could find out by examining these banks' peso holdings six months ago in comparison with what they are holding now. If they are holding way below their normal "position" in pesos currently, then you know they are speculating for profit at our expense. But instead, our bank officials merely rebut the comments by saying they do not believe the peso will fall "that much" and expect 50 to the dollar by the end of the year.

A genuine and normal concern is that the government is running a larger than desirable budget deficit. It could weaken the peso if the government is forced to increase borrowings particularly in dollars. However, this administration is taking measures to keep the deficit in check. Further, most borrowings are from the domestic sector and at rates significantly lower than a year ago.

In my opinion, there is no significant fiscal (government spending) or monetary (interest rate) reason for this current peso depreciation. And if you want to blame it on the political and criminal affairs in the South, you are wrong because that is not how the markets think or operate. Our economic system has plenty of dollars privately and publicly held to support importers' needs. Our problem is being caused by currency speculation. This is clearly a case of the "monetary police" standing by and doing nothing while the "currency criminals" get away with financial murder. And you and your family are the victims.

The solution is to suspend interbank dealing in the peso, have the BSP as the primary seller and buyer of dollars, set the rate twice a day, and require extensive PROOF that these dollar purchases are for actual needs for overseas remittance for goods, services, and debt service to eliminate large scale speculation.

If this government, through its central bank, does not take measures immediately, we will see nothing less than an economic disaster that will erase all the gains made over the last decade. Remember what I said three weeks ago about 30-peso-a-liter gasoline and 500-peso-a-kilo powdered milk? It is going to happen. The current policy is madness and must be changed.

(John Mangun can be reached at 636-1121 to 35, Fax Number 634-2349 or e-mail at johnmangun@yahoo.com.)

THIS series on Philippine Banking history is published in the business section of the **Philippine Daily Inquirer** in commemoration of the 150th year of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), *formerly El Banco Español Filipino de Isabel 2* (The Spanish Filipino Bank of Isabel II), the first bank to be established in the Philippines and Southeast Asia.

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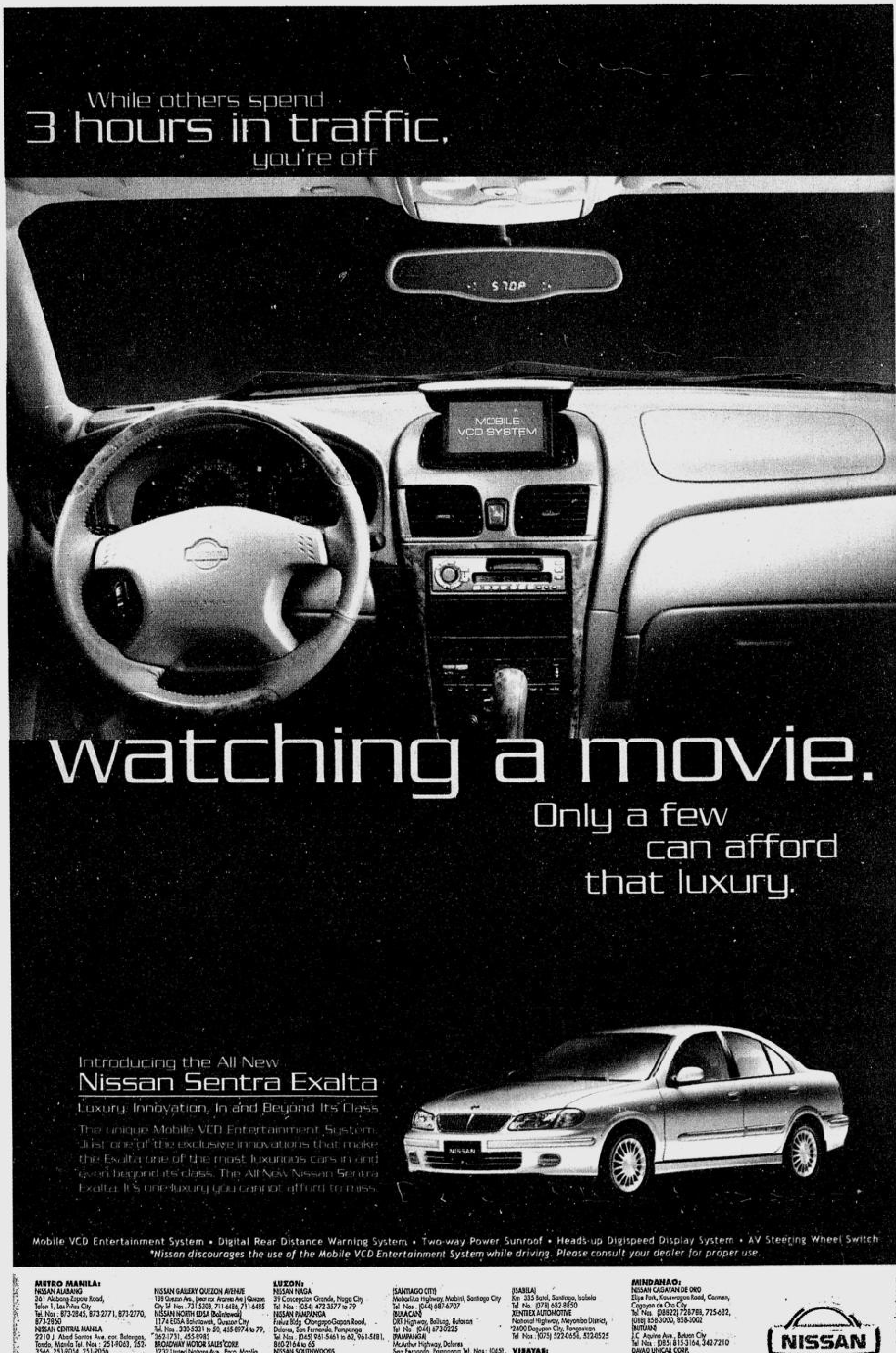

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Trading seen to remain weak

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE MAIN share index is seen to renew attempts to break out of the 1400 resistance level this week as the market continues to await positive news on the political and economic fronts.

After ending the week almost unchanged at 1396.30 or 0.62 point lower on Friday, the market is still seen awaiting some upward correction for the Philippine Stock Exchange composite index (Phisix).

MARKET PLAY

"The market seems to be holding back the selling pressures now. It has tried to break the 1400 index but still it (held on). There's no constructive news yet, but hopefully what the President has said would create some confidence build-up on the peace-and-order situation so that the index will consolidate at a higher level," Summit Securities president Harry Liu said.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo announced on Friday the capture of 31 Abu Sayyaf bandits and supporters. She also expressed strong support to market reforms proposed by the local financial community.

First Orient Securities president and former PSE chair Trinidad Kalaw said these positive development should bring cheers to the market when it reopens today.

"It will be positive for Monday at the very least, but it has to take more than this to make it go on," she said.

In terms of specific issues, the ongoing race for control of RFM Corp.'s Cosmos Bottling Corp. is still expected to bring some frenzy to the market but the developments on the peso-dollar exchange rate would still be a crucial factor.

"Barring any unexpected event, trading for the coming week will continue to be lackluster in the absence of fresh incentives. We don't see anything concrete on the fundamental front. There's no established trend in the marketplace at present. The optimism in early June after the passage of the Omnibus Power Bill has diminished as those who bought on renewed hopes, now seem to be waiting for tangible signs of an economic rebound," AB Capital Securities analyst Jose Vistan said.

Although the downside risks now appeared small, Vistan said there was still no assurance whether the lower end of the consolidation range would hold.

"We still have a very weak economy and we find it hard to believe that we won't see any more bad news this year. Once the support caves in, we will see an acceleration of technical selling. Investors are still advised to stay on the sidelines as we brace for the flood of corporate quarterly results," he said.

BPI Securities analyst Spencer Yap said potential fallout from the emerging debt crises in Argentina, Brazil and Turkey might spill over the emerging markets like the Philippines.

"The market is likely to remain weak. The repeated failures to break 1400 convincingly are a rather strong indication of market weakness. In addition, the macroeconomy remains a drag on sentiments with investors buffeted from a weak peso, a declining economy and rising interest rates," Yap said.

"With the low price levels of most issues, investors are merely waiting for a trigger to begin accumulation. This could be some good news on the political front, economy, or corporate results. Until such time, however, the market will continue to bounce within its current narrow trading range," he said.

Meanwhile, 2tradeasia.com said there could be chances for the Phisix to bolt out from 1380-1410 and test 1420-1450 within the week.

"Although most negative news has already been absorbed into share prices, sustaining an ascent is another matter. Fund managers might still decide to gradually position on dips, but would only aggressively accumulate selected stocks in case participation at the bourse improves. Also, we expect some local participants to rotate funds from sturdier blue-chip stocks and scout trading opportunities in second tiers," it said.

DFNN eyes Indonesian market

By Doris C. Dumlao

AFTER a joint venture in mainland China, technology upstart DFNN.com is making inroads into the Indonesian market and working double-time to become profitable by next year, or two years ahead of original target.

In an interview, DFNN chair Ramon Garcia Jr. said the opening of a wholly owned DFNN.com-Indonesia was part of the group's strategy to expand in the region.

He also noted that the strategy to tap offshore markets was now starting to bear fruit and would likely allow the group to start churning out profits ahead of the 2004 target pledged to investors when the company went public last year.

"DFNN Indonesia will be wholly owned but it's basically a marketing office because in essence, our production is still based here in the Philippines because if we need Chinese (solutions) we refer it to DFNN Chinois Ltd.," Garcia said.

"We'll be selling our products in Indonesia. At the end of the day, despite the news we hear about that country, Indonesia still has to trade, still has to bank and access money through automated teller machines (ATM)," he said.

Garcia said DFNN has already sent some people to establish the new Indonesian office.

"We are talking to a number of banks as well as a number of brokers there. I'm crossing my fingers so that hopefully we'll seal some deals over the next quarter," he said.

He explained that dollar-earnings from DFNN's various businesses were now subsidizing the cost of local operations, allowing the group to post higher revenues and incur lower costs based on original projections. He said several custom-made programming and ATM and switching software were bringing in the greenbacks for the group.

The group's biggest money-maker, according to Garcia, is Intelligent Wave Inc. (IWI), a technology provider for financial institutions whose majority stake DFNN acquired early last year.

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Friday, July 13, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	71	71	70	70.5	133,100
China Banking Corp.	650	650	650	650	30
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	35.5	35.5	35.5	35.5	25,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	205	206	204	205	36,380
Philippine National Bank	41	41	41	41	100
Phil. Savings Bank	28.5	29	28.5	29	36,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	1,000
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	10,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	250	255	250	255	420
Manulife Financial Corp.	1420	1430	1420	1430	1,640
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1250	1255	1250	1255	9,550
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	40	40.5	40	40.5	2,800
Diversified Fin. Network	8.5	8.8	8.5	8.8	4,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.5	0.5	1,700,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	670	670	670	670	530
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	30,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.8	4	3.7	4	40,000
Piltel	0.6	0.6	0.58	0.58	270,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	700	700	690	690	35,810
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.035	0.035	0.034	0.035	27,900,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	38.5	38.5	38	38	4,500
Manila Electric Co. B	51	53	51	52	136,300
Petron Corp.	2.04	2.06	1.98	2.02	840,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.46	2.48	2.34	2.34	3,491,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.41	0.44	0.41	0.44	230,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	50,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	10,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	1,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	640,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	14,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.16	1.2	1.16	1.2	164,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.08	2.08	2.06	2.06	25,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5	5	4.85	4.9	1,065,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	139,000
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	26.5	27	26	27	422,900
Pancake House Inc.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	10,000
RFM Corp.	2.2	2.26	2.2	2.22	4,922,000
San Miguel Corp. A	42.5	43	42	42.5	229,100
San Miguel Corp. B	48	50.5	48	50	646,500
Vitarich Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.82	0.82	0.8	0.8	140,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.82	0.82	0.81	0.81	20,000
Ayala Corp.	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.8	1,207,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	10,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.48	1.52	1.46	1.52	381,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	10.75	11.25	10.75	11	2,200
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	1.22	1.24	1.12	1.16	1,955,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	120,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	17,000,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	600
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.225	0.23	0.225	0.23	180,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.82	1.84	1.76	1.76	2,129,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	10,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	200,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	40,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	280,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.145	0.13	0.13	2,930,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	190,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	31	31.5	31	31.5	147,500
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	150,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	100,000
Ionics Inc.	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	8,100
Ipeople Inc.	1.24	1.26	1.24	1.26	107,000
Ipeople Inc. B	1.24	1.26	1.24	1.26	45,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	100,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	40,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	1,010,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	5.7	6.2	5.6	6.2	98,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	1,440,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	190,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Corp.	1.92	2	1.92	2	230,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	1,000,000
Prime Gaming Mgmt. Corp.	15	15	15	15	100,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.83	0.86	0.83	0.86	100,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.25	15	14.25	15	35,800
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.51	0.51	0.5	0.5	1,100,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.51	0.52	0.51	0.51	1,630,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.44	0.46	0.44	0.46	160,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	150,000
Philippine Racing Club	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	15,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	40.5	40.5	40	40	199,600
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.84	1.86	1.84	1.86	10,000
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0026	0.0028	0.0026	0.0028	12,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.5	18,200
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10	10	10	10	1,000
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.022	0.023	0.021	0.023	77,200,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.2	358,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	30,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	10,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	40,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	50,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	150,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.31	710,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.14	2.14	2.12	2.12	248,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.14	0.145	0.14	0.145	20,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	110,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	20,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4	973,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	200,000
UrbanCorp.Realty Dev. Inc.	0.51	0.58	0.5	0.51	920,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	1,000,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	2,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	6,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	25,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.035	0.042	0.034	0.041	85,000,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines B	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	1,600,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	10,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	1,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	2,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0044	0.0046	0.0044	0.0046	38,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.022	0.024	0.022	0.023	81,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.42	0.42	0.41	0.42	5,350,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.45	0.45	0.44	0.44	4,000,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.022	0.024	0.022	0.024	55,200,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0046	0.0046	0.0044	0.0044	41,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.25	0.28	0.25	0.27	80,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.25	140,000
Pacifica	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.018	25,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	253,220	33,213,990.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	167,356,440	153,935,870.00
PRO	3,839,000	9,428,310.00
Mining	220,991,000	9,444,080.00
OIL	121,420,000	1,944,900.00
GRAND TOTALS:	513,859,660	207,967,150.00

	AVERAGES	
Banks & Fin Svc	562.53	DOWN 2.64
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,985.09	DOWN 3.49
PRO	530.55	DOWN 0.15
Mining	1,384.36	UP 23.52
OIL	1.66	UP 0.08
All Shares Index	797.40	UP 3.26
Composite	1,396.30	DOWN 3.12

NO. OF ADVANCES: 47; NO. OF DECLINES: 37; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 37;
NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 121; NO. OF TRADES: 2,197

CURRENCIES

July 13, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.171372	1.000000	53.2460
Japan	Yen	0.009460	0.008076	0.4300
United Kingdom	Pound	1.648823	1.407600	74.9491
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.150187	0.128215	6.8269
Switzerland	Franc	0.661419	0.564653	30.0655
Canada	Dollar	0.766604	0.654450	34.8468
Singapore	Dollar	0.638768	0.545316	29.0359
Australia	Dollar	0.592021	0.505408	26.9110
Bahrain	Dinar	3.107252	2.652661	141.2436
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.312340	0.266645	14.1978
Brunei	Dollar	0.636788	0.543626	28.9459
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000103	0.000088	0.0047
Thailand	Baht	0.025722	0.021959	1.1692
UAE	Dirham	0.318922	0.272264	14.4970
Korea	Won	0.000904	0.000772	0.0411
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.853700	45.4561
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.43649	23.2413
France	Franc	0.152450	0.130146	6.9298
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.387392	20.6271
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.062041	3.3034
Belgium	Franc	0.024790	0.021163	1.1268
Italy	Lire	0.000517	0.000441	0.0235
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.143582	7.6452
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004258	0.2267
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005131	0.2732
Luxembourg	Franc	0.024790	0.021163	1.1268
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.083975	57.7173

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268 Kalentong Street, Mandaluyong City
SEC. Licensed Broker 10573

BUYING:		SELLING	
Alabang A/B	1,600,000/2,000,000	Alabang A/B	1,850,000/2,100,000
Baguio Country Club	750,000	Baguio Country Club	750,000
Canyon Woods	240,000	Camp John Hay Golf	350,000
Capitol Hills	135,000	Canyon Woods	280,000
Celebrity	205,000	Capitol Hills	135,000
CC at Tagaytay Highland	410,000	Celebrity	205,000
Eagle Ridge A/B/C	400/530/650	CC at Tagaytay Highland	415,000
Forest Hill A/B/C	240/260/400	Eagle Ridge A/B/C	400/590/650
Manila Golf (Indv.)	14,000,000	Forest Hills A/B/C	240/260/400
Manila Golf (Corp.)	16,000,000	Manila Golf (Indv.)	14,300,000
Manila Polo	3,500,000	Manila Golf (Corp.)	17,500,000
Manila Southwoods A/B	790/930	Manila Polo	3,500,000
Mt. Malarayat B/C	Please call	Manila Southwoods A/B	790/930
Orchard A/B/C	250/350/500	Mt. Malarayat A/B/C	320/Please call
Puerto Azul	150,000	Orchard A/B/C	260/350/500
Queen City Sports	225,000	Puerto Azul	160,000
Rivera A/B/C	225/300/500	Quezon City Sports	230,000
Sta. Elena A/B	1,900,000/2,200,000	Riviera A/B/C	225/300/500
Tagaytay Highland Golf	900,000	Sta. Elena A/B	1,900,000
Tagaytay Midlands	765,000	Subic Yacht (Indv & Corp.)	Please call
Valley Golf	300,000	Tagaytay Highland Golf	900,000
Wack Wack	8,000,000	Tagaytay Midlands	795,000
		Valley Golf	300,000
		Wack Wack	8,277,000

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G.G & A Club Shares
SEC License Broker #007575 * As of July 16, 2001

CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	-	2,000,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	-	2,300,000
Baguio Country Club	750,000	800,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	-	115,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	-	150,000
Camp John Hay	300,000	350,000
Canlubang	780,000	850,000
Canyonwoods	-	350,000
Capitol Hills	130,000	140,000
Cebu Country Club	1,900,000	2,000,000
Celebrity Sports Club	-	Please Call
Club Filipino	-	330,000
Eagle Ridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	Please Call
Eastridge "A"	Please Call	Please Call
Evercrest "A"	100,000	110,000
Forest Hills "A"	-	235,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	260,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	400,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	375,000	400,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	-	450,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	17,000,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	14,000,000	-
Manila Polo	3,200,000	3,400,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	750,000	800,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	900,000	950,000
Metropolitan Club "A"	150,000	-
Metropolitan Club "B"	-	230,000
Mimosa Golf & Country Club (Corporate)	-	350,000
Montemar (Individual)	Please Call	-
Mt. Malarayat	-	300,000
Orchard Golf Club "A"	-	280,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	380,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	-	500,000
Philippine Columbian	85,000	-
Pueblo de Oro "A"/"B"/"C"	-	Please Call
Puerto Azul	160,000	180,000
Quezon City Sports Club	215,000	240,000
Riviera Golf & Country Club "A"	-	200,000
Royale Tagaytay "A/B/C"	Please Call	Please Call
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	200,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,800,000	1,900,000
Sta. Elena "B"	2,200,000	-
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	550,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	250,000
Tagaytay Country Club	380,000	450,000
Tagaytay Highlands	900,000	1,100,000
Tagaytay Midlands	800,000	850,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	180,000	200,000
Valley Golf	270,000	-
Wack-Wack Golf Club	8,000,000	8,500,000

PLAYING RIGHTS
(Available Lessees)
Manila Golf 450,000

(Available Lessors)

Alabang "A"	40,000	Mimosa Golf	20,000
Calatagan "A"	10,000	Orchard "A"	20,000
Canlubang	70,000	Riviera "A"	15,000
Eagleridge	30,000	Sta. Elena	70,000
Eastridge "A"	20,000	Tagaytay CC	30,000
Forest Hills	30,000	Tagaytay Golf	65,000
Manila Southwoods	40,000	Tivoli Royale	20,000
Makati Sports "A"	35,000	Valley Golf	20,000
Manila Golf	500,000	Wack-Wack	90,000

For more information, please call:
MAKATI Tel # 840-1761 • Fax # 894-3021 / 750-7894
ALABANG Tel # 850-8223 • Fax # 772-1817
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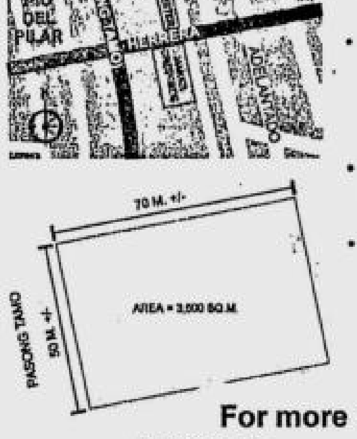

- The property is a 3,500 sq.m. rectangular shaped lot
- Located within the vicinity of mid-rise office and residential developments southwest of the Makati CBD
- Enclosed with a steel fence without any improvements or structure standing on the site
- PLDT, Smart Communications, public mailing system and other privately owned companies cater to the communications requirements of business and residential developments in the area
- Situated along Chino Roces Avenue, property is zoned for commercial use
- Utilities readily available to the site include overhead power, water, telephone and public sewer.

For more information, please contact
Benjie Pablo
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bpablo@fpdsavills.com.ph
Argy Noblejas
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rnoblejas@fpdsavills.com.ph

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AS OF JULY 13, 2001

	ASKED PRICE	BID PRICE
1. ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	2,000,000.00	-
2. ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	2,300,000.00	-
3. BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	850,000.00	-
4. CALATAGAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	110,000.00	-
5. CAMP JOHN HAY GOLF CLUB	400,000.00	350,000.00
6. CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	Please call	-
7. COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	480,000.00	-
8. EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	-	360,000.00
9. EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "B"	550,000.00	-
10. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	450,000.00	-
11. MANILA POLO CLUB	3,800,000.00	-
12. MANILA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB (Individual)	Please call	-
13. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "A"	850,000.00	700,000.00
14. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "B"		900,000.00
15. MONTEMAR BEACH CLUB	30,000.00	-
16. MT. MALARAYAT "B"	450,000.00	-
17. ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "A"	-	250,000.00
18. PUERTO AZUL BEACH CLUB	160,000.00	-
19. PHILIPPINE COLUMBIAN ASSOCIATION	-	85,000.00
20. QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	-	235,000.00
21. RIVIERA GOLF CLUB "A"	-	200,000.00
22. STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB "A"	2,000,000.00	-
23. SHERWOOD HILLS "B"	350,000.00	-
24. TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS INT'L. GOLF CLUB	1,000,000.00	-
25. TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS GOLF CLUB	830,000.00	-
26. VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB (Individual)	200,000.00	185,000.00
27. VERDEMAR GOLF CLUB, INC. (CEBU)	Please call	-
28. WACK-WACK GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	Please call	-
29. THE COUNTRY CLUB	Please call	-
30. OTHERS	Please call	-

PLAYING RIGHTS ALSO AVAILABLE
AMELIA B. MAGAT - Asst. Treasurer/Comptroller
or call ROMEO M. RIBANO
SHIONEL PIGA / REYNALDO CUEVAS
GROUND FLOOR, TUSCAN BUILDING, 114 HERRERA STREET
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Partial list 07/13/2001 CLUBS	ASKED Price	Share Swapping: Please Call CLUBS	BID Price
CANLUBANG	900,000	ALABANG "A"	1,800,000
CC @ TAGAYTAY	470,000	CALATAGAN "A"	110,000
CLUB FILIPINO	280,000	CELEBRITY CLUB	200,000
MAKATI SPORTS "A"/"B"	0.43M/0.45M	EAGLERIDGE "A"	390,000
MANILA GOLF (CORP.)	17,500,000	EAGLERIDGE "B"	300,000
MANILA GOLF (INDIV.)	14,500,000	EAGLERIDGE "C"	600,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	850,000	MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	700,000
MANILA POLO CLUB	4,000,000	MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"	900,000
MIMOSA (CORP.)	390,000	MT. MALARAYAT "C"	Call now
MIMOSA (INDIV.)	250,000	PUNTA FUEGO	Call now
MT. MALARAYAT "A"	500,000	QUEZON CITY SPORTS "A"	225,000
ORCHARD "A"/"B"/"C"	0.28M/0.60M/0.65M	RIVIERA "A"	200,000
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The color of courage

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

IN reply to my June 11 column, "What's Wrong with Privatizing SSS?" Ferdinand R. Gaite, national president of The Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage), sent a blistering letter. (It reminded me of my five-year old granddaughter Timmy's favorite TV cartoon character—Courage, the cowardly dog.)

Thundered Gaite, "What right do SSS officials and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo have to (privatize SSS?)." SSS President Vitaliano Nañagas said in an inter-office memo that it was not possible to privatize SSS lock stock and barrel, like the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage System (MWSS). He said the funds were private, having been collected from the private sector. But the SSS is looking into the feasibility of privatizing certain functions, such as investment, information technology and producing ID cards.

Gaite thundered on: "It does not matter if the plan involves partial privatization of the investments and IT functions." Top management has the solemn duty to keep improving the efficiency of any corporation. The law underscores this by allowing SSS to "enter into agreements or contracts for such service and aid, as may be needed for the proper, efficient and stable administration" subject to the approval of the SSS Commission.

Gaite goes on: "the point is, hard-earned money from workers contributed to the SSS should not be put in the hands of profiteers to earn huge profits for themselves." Of course, SSS money should not be put in the hands of profiteers. But Manila and the rest of the world are full of thoroughly professional fund managers who may handle SSS funds more profitably than any in-house investment department. Gaite ought to visit the trust department of a bank or the group division of a life insurance company. He will find billions of pesos of private pension funds being managed for clients, including the largest conglomerates. In a highly competitive business like fund management, a profiteer will not last long. His competitors will see to that.

Gaite claims that "the private sector is interested in the IT function not only because it is profitable but also because information on 11 million (the real figure is 22 million) Filipinos is power. A potential market for their other products." Nañagas says that SSS computers are now running at full capacity. He asks: "Should SSS buy more hardware, or hire the unused capacity of the computers in the private sector?" Of course, if the latter is chosen, the privacy of the members will continue to be protected.

Gaite exaggerates. As a result, he weakens his case. He claims 500,000 government employees have been laid off by privatization. This is 42 percent of all policyholders of GSIS. If true, GSIS would be gasping for breath by now. Also, Courage is supposed to have 300,000 members. If you believe this, you were born yesterday.

Gaite was hurt when I asked where Courage was at the time SSS was being plundered under the Estrada presidency. Did Courage ever raise a voice when the scandalous merger of Equitable-PCI bank came to light in mid-1999? I did not hear a pip from Gaite when it became known that SSS members had lost about P4 billion on the deal.

Gaite said Courage was busy marching against privatizing since 1987. What a lame excuse and a terrible waste of energy. By the way, was he national president all this time? Does he hold a hammerlock on the position? And where did he get the money to spend on all those demonstrations? Did he perhaps get an allocation from the so-called revolutionary taxes that the New People's Army extorts from the poorest of the poor in the distant barrios nationwide?

Gaite throws the question back; where was I then? I was nowhere near any of their protest marches because I strongly believe in privatization. I am a dirty, stinking, lowdown capitalist lapdog—and proud of it. I don't mess around with lousy commies.

Then, Gaite boasts of Courage's brave participation at Edsa II. Funny thing, but it is only the commies who keep reminding all of us of their bravery at Edsa II. Probably because they cannot get over their conspicuous absence at Edsa I.

Gaite proves that Courage is one of the many communist front organizations that clutter the landscape. He is a communist mole in the government service. And the color of Courage is red.

SEC may place Pamana under receivership

BY ELENA R. TORRIJOS

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission is threatening to place pre-need firm Pamana Inc. under receivership unless it started making good on its payments to plan holders.

Francisco Villaruz, SEC director for non-traditional securities and instruments department, said the SEC had received and verified reports that Pamana had been issuing bouncing checks to plan holders.

Pamana is no longer allowed to sell plans. It continues to exist and operate only to service claims of plan holders.

Villaruz said the SEC had told Pamana to immediately "replace the bad checks with good checks or the Commission would compel it to convert real estate investments into cash or near cash assets."

Pamana had submitted a list of checks that, it claimed, were already replaced. "But if these checks will still bounce, the SEC will consider either (putting the company under) receivership or liquidation of the company, he said.

Pamana's liquidity crunch was brought about by bad investments in real estate and the sale of traditional plans.

The SEC last year reported to the House Committee on Banks and Financial Institutions that the real estate investments of many pre-need companies' trust funds were in excess of the 25-percent limit. SEC data submitted to the House Committee showed that Pamana Inc., which stopped selling pre-need plans after failing to pay the claims of existing plan holders on time, had all of its trust fund equity invested in real estate.

Pre-need companies and their trustee banks, which manage trust fund investments, have been given up to next year to dispose of their excess real estate investment and another six months to sell their excess stock investments.

The SEC ordered these companies to submit their programs on how to dispose of real estate and equity investments in excess of the prescribed limits.

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DMCI HOLDINGS INCORPORATED

NOTICE OF POSTPONEMENT OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

Dear Stockholders:

Please be notified that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of DMCI Holdings, Inc. has been postponed from July 25, 2001 to **August 8, 2001**. The meeting will be held at 9:00 A.M., Universal Business Club, 4th Floor, Equitable Bank Building, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.

All stockholders of record as of June 25, 2001 shall be entitled to notice of and vote at said annual meeting.

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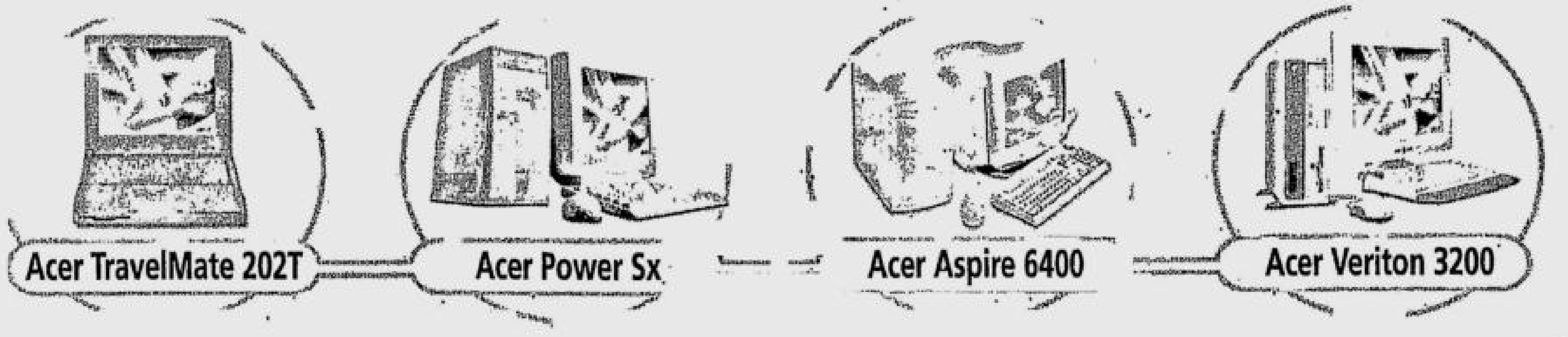

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JG Summit taps $100-M loan to finance capex

By Elena R. Torrijos

JG SUMMIT Holdings Inc., the publicly listed holding company of the Gokongwei family, is tapping $100 million in syndicated loan to finance the capital expenditures of its telecommunications, property and food businesses.

In an interview, JG Summit executive vice president Lance Gokongwei said that 70 percent of the loan proceeds would finance the capital expenditures of the three businesses while the balance would be used to repay portion of JG Summit's $150 million worth of bonds maturing next year.

JG Summit has commissioned ING Barings as the underwriter for the loan, which was launched Wednesday night.

The dollar-denominated loan will mature in five years with a put option on the third year. It will carry a coupon rate ranging from 320 basis points to 365 basis points over either three-month or six-month London Interbank Offer Rate (Libor) depending on the level of participation of the syndicate members.

Gokongwei earlier said that the JG Summit, through its snack food arm Universal Robina Corp., would also increase its investments in its existing food businesses in China, Thailand and Malaysia.

JG Summit also reported it was planning to expand its investments in the region, to cover specifically India and Indochina. This will likely focus on the branded consumer food line.

The company has been continuously exploring opportunities for its Singapore-based affiliate United Industrial Corp., which owns one of Singapore's largest office property developers.

The holding company is seeking potential partners for JG Summit Petrochemicals Corp. and Digitel, which has earlier secured a license to enter into the wireless phone service business. Digitel is expected to start its mobile phone operations later this year.

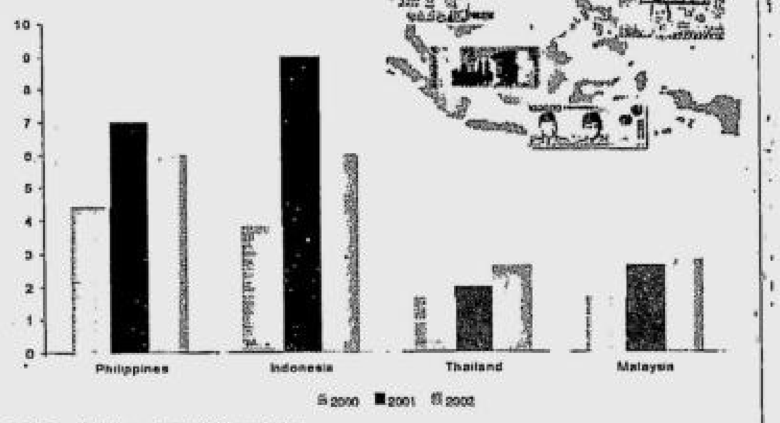
JG Summit posted a net income of P2.98 billion last year or 77.4 percent down from the previous year's net income of P13.19 billion. The previous year's income, however, included extraordinary gains from the sale of its stakes in APO Cement, Philippine Commercial International Bank and Far East Bank and Trust Bank Co. Excluding non-recurring items, the company's profit rose 6.4 percent from P2.8 billion.

Consolidated revenues increased 14.1 percent to P34.4 billion from P30.17 billion during the period covered following improvements in the revenues of its food, real estate, telecommunications and petrochemical ventures.

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

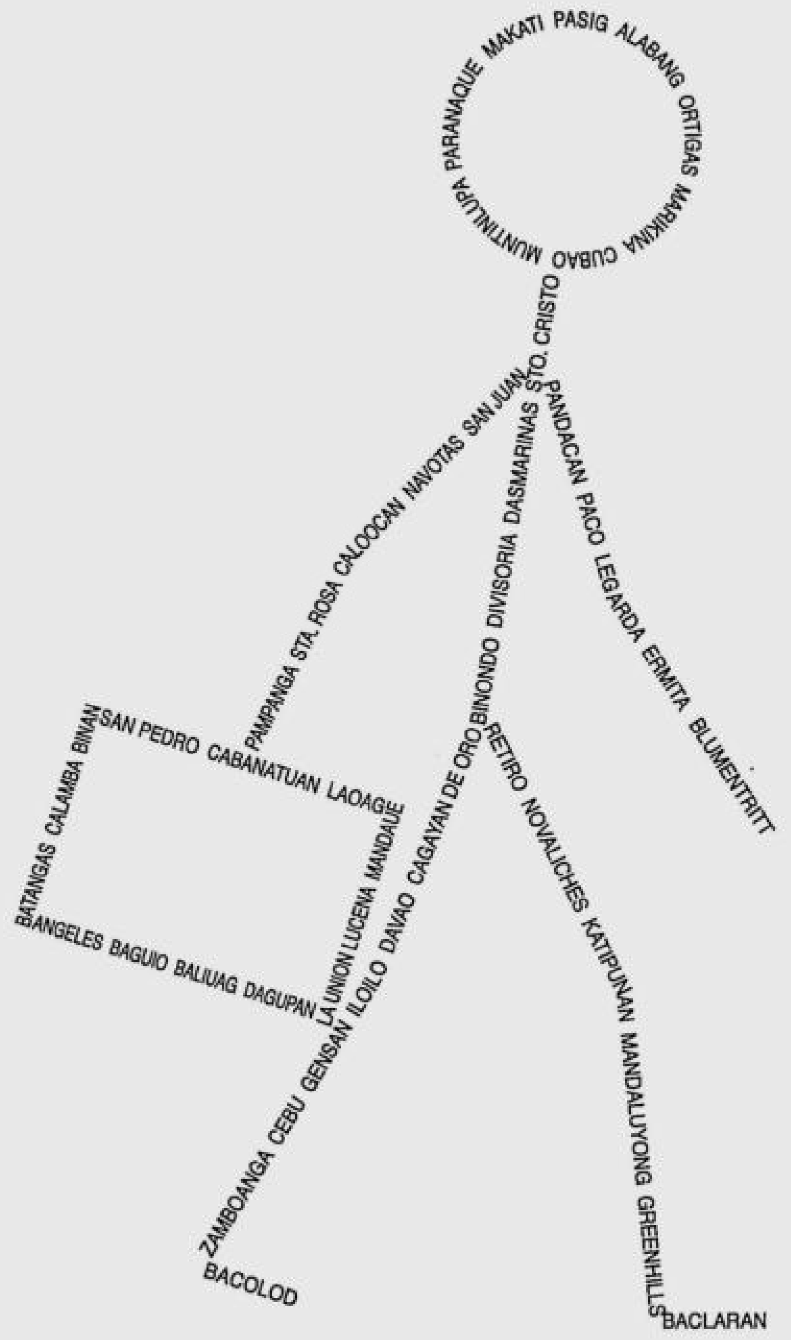
Inflation rates of selected SE Asian countries*
(2000 to 2002, in percent)



* 2000=actual figure; 2001-2002=projected
Source: Asian Development Bank's "Asia Recovery Report 2001"

FOR 2001, Asian Development Bank's inflation rate projection for the Philippines was pegged at 7 percent, 1 percentage point lower than the International Monetary Fund's projection of 8 percent. Last year, the Philippines, at 4.4 percent, had the highest rate among the four countries.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research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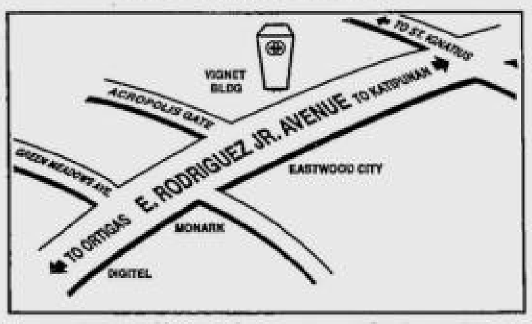
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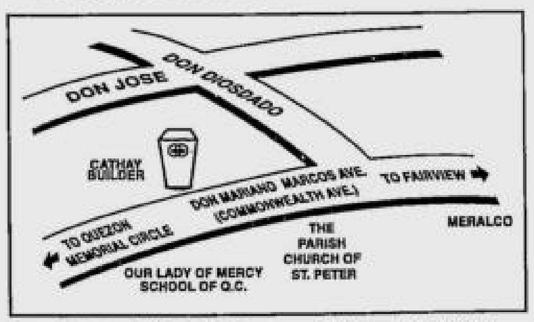
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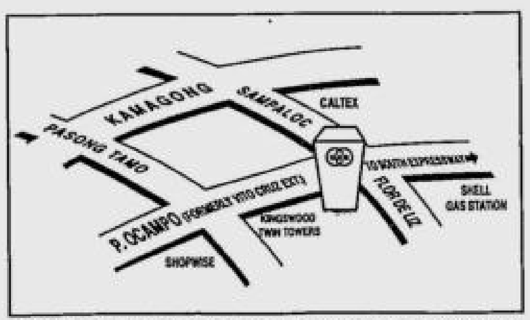
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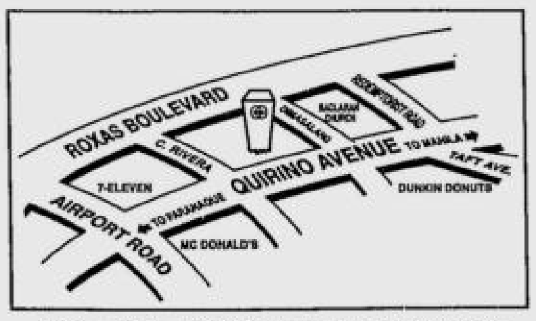
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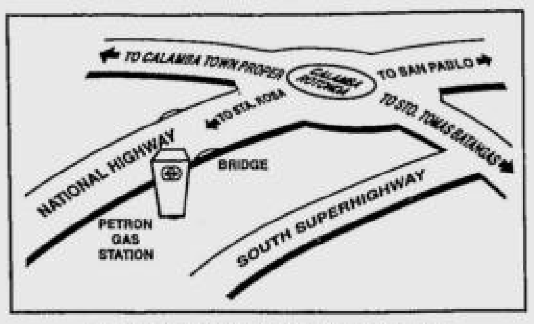
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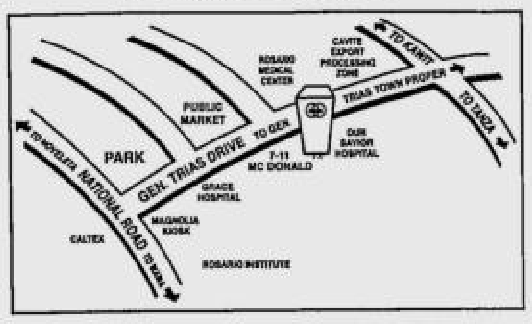
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BOI allows 'soft CKD' importation

AFTER stopping the importation of semi-knocked down units by automotive assemblers at preferred duties, the Board of Investment is crafting a new import category for completely-knocked down (CKD) units that will initially allow luxury sedan assemblers to bring in their models at substantially lower duties .

The BOI believes that encouraging assemblers to bring in vehicles in soft CKD version—units that are either unpainted or not yet welded—would enable them to maximize their factories that have been idled by the steep plunge in sales in the last few years.

Car assemblers are operating way below capacity (their factories were expanded shortly before the Asian financial meltdown in 1997), which had already resulted in the dislocation of thousands of workers.

The BOI had decided to stop the importation of SKDs—a base unit without batteries and tires—this year to encourage assemblers to use more locally assembled parts. Assemblers prefer SKDs to CKDs because the former requires less labor and less parts purchases from local vendors. Also, both SKDs and CKDs are charged the same duty at 10 percent.

With the new BOI policy, all SKD packs would have to pay the same 30 percent duty slapped on completely built-up (CBU) units.

The BOI reckoned that the loss in duty collections—a CBU is charged 10 times more in duty versus a soft CKD—would be more than compensated for by the jobs and revenues to be created by the anticipated rise in painting and welding jobs. The paint process costs P200,000 for each unit while welding jobs would fetch P30,000 for each unit

The proposed BOI policy is expected to be more liberal than SKD imports because it would do away with the mandatory upgrade to CKD assembly in the issuance of soft CKD permits. Aside from luxury car assemblers, the BOI is reportedly keen on allowing soft CKD imports for compact to mid-range sedans that are mostly assembled from CKD packs.

The soft CKD policy was an offshoot of a BOI exemption granted to Asian Carmakers Corp. of businessman Jose C. Alvarez. Asian Carmakers was allowed to bring in soft CKD packs of BMW models sans a commitment to go into full CKD assembly.

PCCI pledges support to GMA's anti-poverty efforts

THE PHILIPPINE Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), through its president Miguel B. Varela, has pledged to assist the government in its fight against poverty.

"The PCCI is cognizant to the fact that poverty, which afflicts a large percentage of Filipinos, continues to pose an enormous challenge to the development of the country. It is therefore an imperative that the business sector plays an even greater role in the drive to alleviate millions of Filipinos from the depressing state of poverty," the business group said in a statement.

In line with this, the PCCI has expressed its willingness to participate in the Macapagal Administration's most recent anti-poverty program, known as the Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan (Kalahi) program. It also spearheaded recent talks with the National Anti-Poverty Commission, National Economic Development Authority and the Department of Interior and Local Government that aimed to identify the specific role of the private sector in this initiative.

Working under the Kalahi umbrella, the PCCI is also undertaking its own poverty alleviation program through its "Adopt a Barangay Project." This program elicits the support and cooperation of not only the PCCI's extensive membership roster, but also other interested non-PCCI companies and business associations.

Under this scheme, the PCCI enjoins all members of the business sector to participate in the project that aims to rise above the usual dole out schemes normally identified with the private sector. The project employs a more constructive game plan.

The PCCI encourages participating companies and associations to provide livelihood and entrepreneurial training seminars, which, in the long run, are expected to contribute so much in raising the living standards of the recipient communities. However, companies will still be given the flexibility to implement the traditional development projects (i.e., health care, infrastructure, education, etc.) within their chosen Barangays.

Fueling the PCCI's anti-poverty campaign is the underlying objective to strengthen the ties between business and community.

UK firm trains sight on Transco concession

BY RONNEL W. DOMINGO

THE NATIONAL Grid of the United Kingdom is seriously considering bidding for the concession rights of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco), according to a person familiar with the matter.

The source, a Transco official who asked not to be named, said National Grid held initial talks with the government on the upcoming privatization of Transco.

The government has a working target of between $2.4 billion and $2.7 billion in proceeds from Transco's privatization, which the Electric Industry Restructuring Act mandates.

The same law provides for the creation of Transco and its assumption of National Power Corp.'s transmission functions.

"The law gives the options of either an outright sale or concession for Transco," the source said.

He explained a concession was probably more attractive to investors because they would have lesser risks than buying Transco outright.

He added that the Constitution limited a foreign company's ownership of a public utility to 40 percent.

"It would be hard to find a local company that would put up the capital for the remaining 60 percent," he said.

In an earlier interview, Transco officer in charge Asisclo Gonzaga explained that in case of a concession, Transco would retain the systems operations function of the utility while the concessionaire would take over its assets.

A concession contract will be good for 25 years and may be renewed for another 25 years.

Gonzaga added that Kyushu Electric Corp. and Electric Power Development Co. of Japan were also interested.

Electricité de France was also identified as a possible bidder for Transco.

The source could not say whether these other companies were holding their own exploratory talks with the government.

"But it would be good if they would participate because the competition they would provide would make Transco's privatization more successful," the source said.

Economic conditions in Japan make Japanese companies capable of buying Transco at a higher price, the source noted.

"And since majority of our loans are from Japan, maybe the Japanese investors could absorb these," the source added.

RP gets ₱1.4B in official assistance from Spain

A TOTAL of 5.6 billion pesetas or roughly P1.4 billion has been earmarked by Spain through the Agencia Espanola de Cooperation International (AECI) for its Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the Philippines for 2001 to 2003.

Officials representing the Philippines and Spain signed in Madrid recently the Fourth Joint Commission that spells out the details of the how the Spanish ODA will be used.

For the next three years, Spain and the Philippines agreed to focus on areas and sectors that both countries consider priorities in accordance with the framework of the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) 2001-2004 and the plans defined by the Directive Plan of the Cooperation Española.

The Spanish ODA will fund programs and projects involving poverty alleviation, sustainable environment and gender equity. This will be done through interventions directed at basic social needs (water supply, health, health, education, governance and civil society, food security, and emergency assistance and reconstruction) and strengthening of the economic structure (micro-credit, enterprise, agriculture and rural development, industry development and tourism).

The programs and projects to be funded by the ODA will be concentrated in priority areas in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), Caraga, Misamis Oriental, and Camiguin in Mindanao; Ilocos Sur and Metro Manila in Luzon; and Cebu in the Visayas.

Among the programs and projects covered under the Fourth Joint Commission are: the National Eye Referral Center of the Philippine General Hospital (PGH); Fight Against Tuberculosis Program; Primary Health and Food Security in Caraga and Cebu; Reproductive Health Program in Maguindanao; Water Supply Program in the Island of Camiguin and the City of Vigan; Soil Conservation and Agro-forestry in Calaveria; Strengthening the Foundations of Lasting Peace and Development in Southern Philippines.

The Spanish ODA is expected to carry out the following programs and projects: a micro-credit program worth 1.5 B pesetas (P375 millioni); the second phase of the Development of the Philippine Industries for the Small and Medium Scale Enterprise; the Enterprise Cooperation Program for Philippine-Spanish development between the Confederation Española de Organizaciones Empresariales (CEOE) and the Employers Confederation of the Philippines and the continued collaboration in the field of ecotourism in the Philippines.

Priority programs and projects under the Fourth Joint Commission's cultural and education cooperation include, the promotion of the Spanish language; the dissemination of the Philippine-Spanish social and cultural reality; and the preservation of common historic and cultural heritage.

Activities lined up under the preservation of common historic and cultural activities include: the consolidation of the modernization program of the National Archives; the conservation and restoration of school paintings in the University of the Philippines; and the rehabilitation of the Father Burgos Museum in Vigan City.

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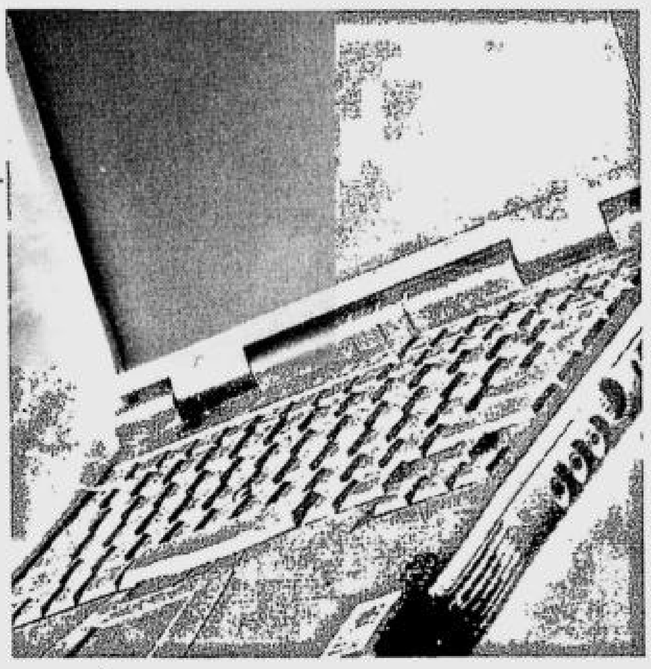

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IMI gets ISO seal

INTEGRATED Microelectronics Inc., a leading electronics company belonging to the Ayala group of companies, has successfully transformed its quality management system from ISO 9000:1994 to the new ISO 9000:2000 international standard.

IMI is the first multi-plant electronics company to be certified in the Philippines by SGS Philippines Inc. to the new version of the standard.

The audit of IMI's system was carried out last May 28-31 in the company's nine business divisions namely:

CDR R/W Drive Assembly (SBDD), Printed Circuit Board and Electronic Product Assembly (SBDJ), Optical Disk Drive Assembly (SBDK), Surface Acoustic Wave Device Assembly (SBDO), Voice Coil Monitor Assembly (SBDQ), Head Stack Assembly, Head and Gimbal Assembly (SBDR), Hall Element Assembly (SBDT) and Bail Grid Array Inspection (SBDU2).

ESP calls for a total log ban

ANTONIO M. Claparols, Ecological Society of the Philippines president and regional councilor of International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, has called on the government "to protect our remaining forests and cancel all the remaining (TLA) Timber License Agreements. The President should have the political will to protect and conserve our environment and implement all our environmental laws."

ESP first made the call for a total log ban 15 years ago but there seemed to be no real intention of imposing the ban, he said. Many lives have been lost since, not to mention the billions of pesos worth of damage to the economy, environment, agricultural lands and communities all over the country.

The recent typhoon that ravaged Baguio and cut all roads to Northern Luzon was one of the most devastating typhoons in years. And they will only get stronger as global warming and climate change further compound the situation, he said as he stressed the need for the imposition and enforcement of a total log ban in the country.

Technologies, financing forum

A TECHNOLOGIES and financing forum that could help one start or expand business is slated at the Philippine Trade Training Center along Roxas Blvd. in Pasay City on July 18 to 20.

Aside from a conference where resource persons from government agencies and financial institutions will talk on production skills training, market trends, investment opportunities and funding schemes, there will also be an exhibit of services, including a mini bank fair and business clinics.

Early registration starts today at the PTTC lobby from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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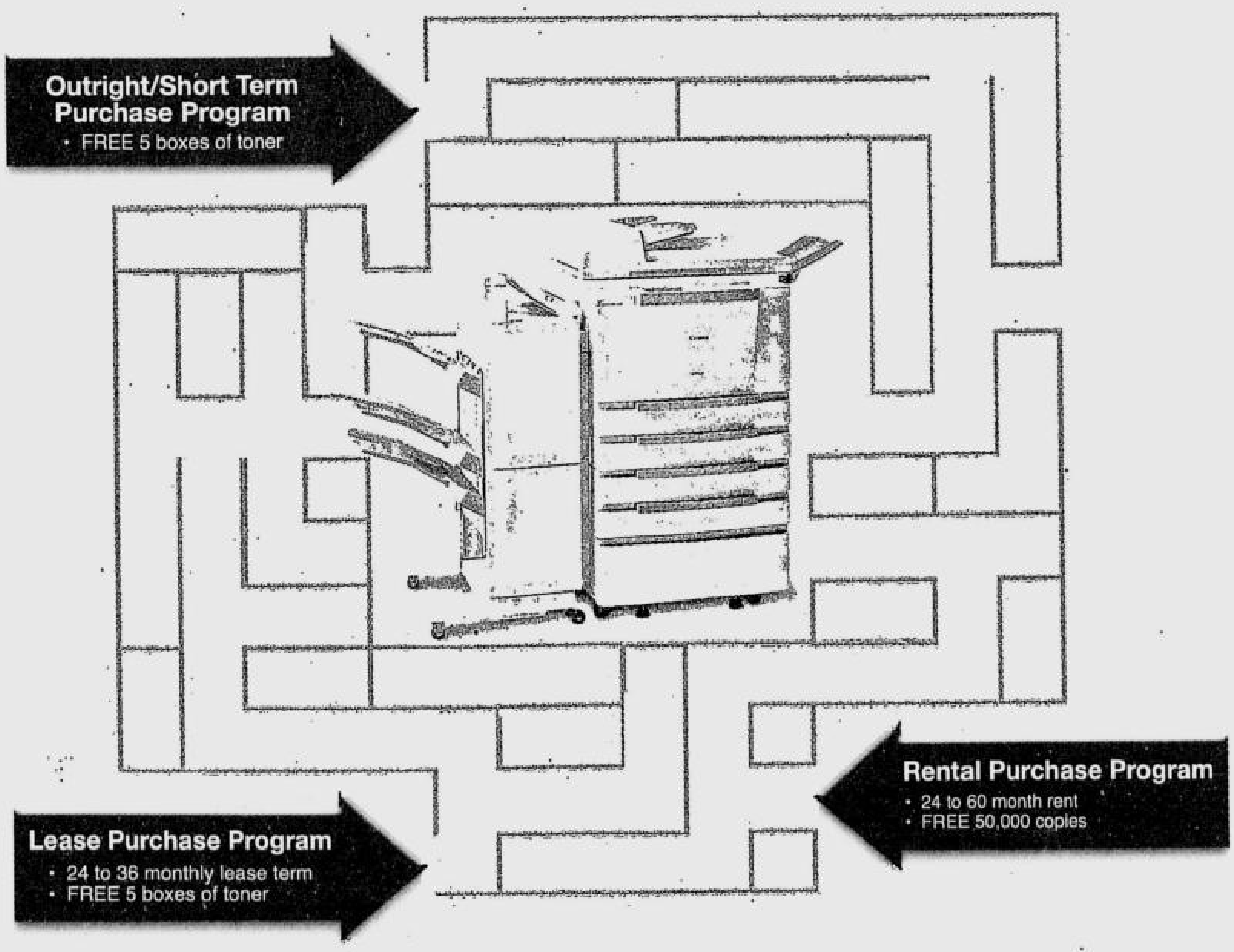

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IMF conditions must be met–US Treasury

ARGENTINE traders talk on the floor of the Buenos Aires stock market. Argentine stocks plunged in Thursday trading amid mounting concern over the country's ability to pay more than $130 billion in public debt. Investors appeared concerned Argentina was being effectively shut out of international credit markets amid widespread worries over its ability to pay off. The new fall came despite a government announcement of new austerity measures late Wednesday aimed at reducing Argentina's ballooning deficit. AP

WASHINGTON—US Treasury Undersecretary for International Affairs John Taylor reiterated Friday that it was important for countries with International Monetary Fund programs to stick to the conditions set out in the agreements.

He said the IMF was now working to enforce this and other policies suggested by the United States to make it a better institution.

"We have talked a lot about having conditionality targeted more toward the kind of program that is being used, whether it is fiscal policy or monetary policy, and once the conditions are stated, there should be an effort that they are adhered to," Taylor said in an interview with Reuters when asked about reform of the institution.

His comments came just a week after the IMF took a tough line with Turkey by delaying a loan tranche because of unfulfilled program conditions. The money was eventually approved on Thursday, but only after the Turkish government took steps in the banking sector and made changes to the board of Turk Telecom—conditions that had been written into the country's contract with the IMF.

Led by Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, the Bush administration has been vocal in its criticism of international financial institutions, but Taylor says changes to the IMF the United States has pushed are already beginning to show through.

"There are a number of things that we have recommended and some of them the IMF is already taking action on," he said. "The IMF is putting that approach (on conditionality) through, and it is different in every program that we deal with."

He also said there was little disagreement between the Treasury, the IMF and the other major shareholding countries of the Washington-based lender about how the fund should be made more efficient.

Taylor reiterated the Treasury line that finding ways to better prevent financial crises was also a key part of IMF reform, adding that discussions were continuing about how best to deal with crises.

IMF external relations director Tom Dawson said Friday that the global financial architecture had grown more resilient since the last crisis and, as such, there was no sign of contagion in the current round of emerging market jitters as was seen during previous crises.

Taylor had said on Tuesday that he saw little evidence of contagion.

During the Friday interview, Taylor said he had nothing to add to his previous comment on contagion, to comments a Treasury official made on Argentina on Thursday, or on the situation in emerging markets in general. On Thursday, a senior Treasury official had said that Treasury was monitoring the situation in Argentina closely.

Taylor emphasized that economic growth through productivity was at the heart of the Bush administration's policy toward the multilateral development banks, such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank, and said this idea had "gotten some good reaction" in many different quarters.

He said African development was "a high priority" for the United States and noted that the Treasury had responsibility for the World Bank and the African Development Bank and the role those two institutions played in Africa.

Taylor, who recently returned from a trip to Africa, said Secretary O'Neill was also planning a trip there.

"We've argued that there should be more grants to go to education and that would be very useful in Africa," he said. Another idea that Treasury is looking at is how to get more private-sector involvement in Africa.

"We have been talking with the International Finance Corporation about doing that, and they have some interesting ideas," he said.

Treasury is in active discussion with the World Bank about Africa and how to better use resources there, he said, adding that there would be a meeting next week between bank and Treasury staff about how to do this. *Reuters*

Russia seen surviving crisis in Argentina

MOSCOW—World Bank President James Wolfensohn completed a weeklong inspection of Russia Friday, saying the country was in much better shape now to deal with the crisis in emerging markets than it was during the 1998 financial crisis.

And while the main RTS index had shed some 30 points since reaching a post-1998 high of 230 on June 22, economists agreed there were few fundamental reasons to flee Russia as they had done in panic three years ago.

Assessing the latest investor jitters in emerging market, Wolfensohn said few could predict what Argentina's economic collapse could spell for the world economy today.

But the World Bank chief stressed that recently imposed structural reforms and high world prices on Russian energy exports meant that Moscow was unlikely to collapse as it had done once infected with the 1998 Asia flu.

"My belief is that with the (gold and hard currency) reserves and the growth that you have and high commodity prices on things like oil, I think that you are in better shape than you were just a few years ago," said Wolfensohn.

"You (Russia) are not on the risk list," he told reporters.

Russia's central bank reserves hit a post-Soviet high of $34.2 billion at the end of June, nearly double the level in mid-1998, when—with Western blessing—Moscow began spending hundreds of millions of dollars daily in a futile effort to prop up the ruble.

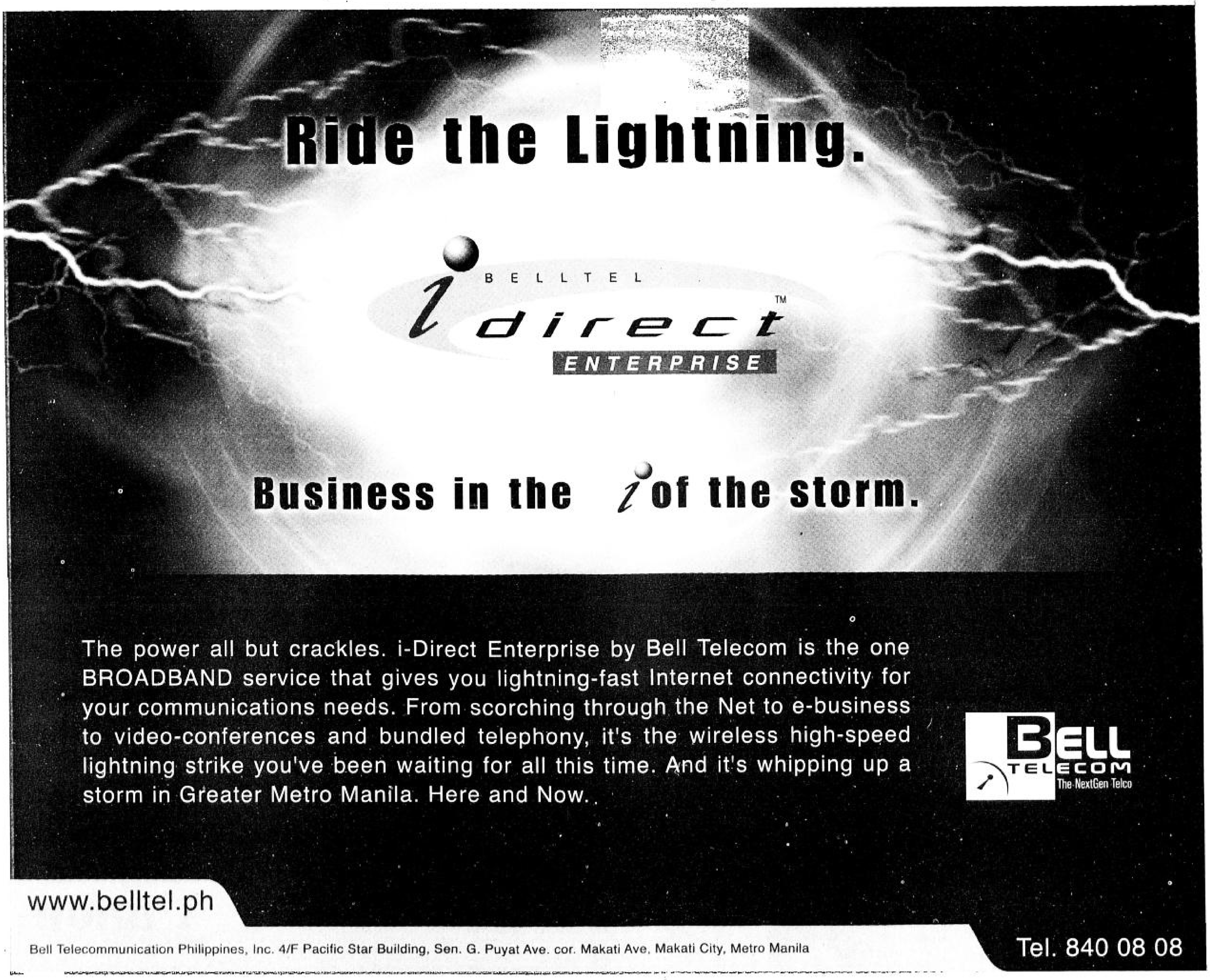
Once the bank gave up, the inevitable currency slide proved a blessing in disguise. While personal savings were wiped out, the ailing Russian manufacturing sector got a boost as many Western imports became too expensive to buy.

And while the benefits of that devaluation have warned off in recent months, high prices on Russian energy exports and, more significantly, the adoption of long-sought tax and structural reforms should keep the economy here purring for months to come, according to economists.

"Although substantial external pressures may persist over the next few weeks, the phenomenal strength of Russia's fundamentals—especially on the macroeconomic and structural adjustment sides—are likely to counterbalance the contagion impact," the United Financial Group said in a note.

The stock market "downside will be limited to an additional 15 percent and underpin an imminent stock price recovery once the initial shock is over," the bank predicted optimistically.

"Countries with fiscal shortfalls (Philippines, Venezuela) are being punished as though the market had just discovered that they had problems," lamented Eric Kraus, head of research at the NIKoil investment firm, in reference to Russia. *AFP*



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Fight against poverty high on agenda of G8

PARIS—The fight against world poverty will be high on the agenda at the Group of Eight meeting here this week, with delegates keen to show the body's worth to the massed ranks of anti-globalization protesters.

The finance ministers of the world's seven richest nations noted at their July 7 summit in Rome that their governments had, over the last two years, agreed to write off some $53 billion to $54 billion of the debt owed by 23 of the most highly indebted poor countries (HIPCs) in Africa and Latin America.

And they promised to increase efforts to help other Third World nations meet the criteria for benefiting from debt relief.

That declaration by the finance chiefs of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States is expected to be woven into a statement on economic questions that will be issued by the G8 summit—the Group of Seven plus Russia—in Genoa from July 20 to 22.

The decision to lessen the debt burden of the 23 countries is the result of an initiative launched by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank at the G7 summit in Cologne in 1999.

Thirteen other HIPCs were still waiting to discover whether they can also benefit, although a German government source told AFP on Wednesday that the candidates would first have to end their wars, tackle corruption or reach a deal with the IMF to combat poverty and encourage development.

Non-governmental organizations have been calling on the G7 for years to lift the entire burden of debt on poor countries and have called for massive protests in Genoa to step up the pressure on the rich man's club.

The G8 has promised to discuss the issue on July 20 with six leaders representing the debt-ridden world—the presidents of Mali, Algeria, South Africa, Nigeria and El Salvador, and the prime minister of Bangladesh.

Officials from the World Bank, the World Health Organization, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization, and the World Trade Organization are also expected to participate.

But while the West has made progress since the Cologne summit, it is still insufficient for many lobby groups, including Britain's Drop the Debt, which wants the entire bill simply written off.

Drop the Debt, which points out that Third World nations spend more on servicing their debts than on health and education, is urging the West to commit to further debt relief "as part of the effort to fight poverty and AIDS in the poorest countries." *AFP*

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US wants case vs Microsoft resolved as soon as possible

WASHINGTON—The US Justice Department asked a federal appeals court on Friday to quickly send the antitrust case against Microsoft Corp. back to a lower court, arguing the software giant's conduct should be reined in as soon as possible.

The agency and the 18 states behind the case requested it be sent back to the US District Court ahead of schedule "in light of the exceptional importance of this case and the strong public interest in prompt entry of a decree providing an effective remedy for Microsoft's illegal conduct."

The motion comes about two weeks after the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia overturned a lower court's order that Microsoft be broken into two companies, while upholding findings that the company abused its monopoly in the market for personal computer operating systems.

While the court rejected findings that Microsoft attempted to monopolize the Internet browser market, it ordered a new lower court judge to consider remedies against the company and determine whether it illegally tied its Internet browser to its Windows operating system.

If the appeals court grants the government's request, it would give prosecutors more time if they decide to ask for remedies that involve Microsoft's new Windows XP operating system, due to be released in October.

"The Justice Department is saying, 'Let's not wait. Let's just get the case back to the district court as soon as possible,'" said Jonathan Baker, professor of antitrust law at American University in Washington.

Under the June 28 ruling, the appeals court was scheduled to send the case back to the district court after a 45-day waiting period, giving both sides a chance to ask it to rehear the case.

That would have meant the district court would take up the case in mid-August at the earliest, about two months before Windows XP is set to be released.

But in Friday's motion, the Justice Department argued that there is "no good reason to delay issuance of the mandate until mid-August or later." Neither the government nor Microsoft plans to ask for a rehearing by the appeals court, the department said.

"Delay in imposing an effective remedy inflicts substantial and widespread consumer injury and needlessly prolongs uncertainty in the computer industry," the department said in its motion.

"In these circumstances, the public interest is plainly served by allowing the proceedings on remand to go forward as quickly as possible," it said.

The government also said in its motion that it will not seek a review from the Supreme Court at this stage.

Microsoft spokesperson Vivek Varma said company officials "share the goal of trying to get the remaining issues in this case resolved as quickly as possible. This is a long and complex decision and we will continue to review our options, and intend to move forward promptly."

Steve Houck, a former prosecutor on the case for New York Attorney General Elliot Spitzer, said the decision to seek to have the case moved quickly was significant.

"The DOJ and the states are on the same page, and they're intent on getting relief as soon as possible, undoubtedly in light of the planned Windows XP introduction," he said. *Reuters*

G8 to unveil plans to create 'e-development' organization

TOKYO—Leaders of the Group of Eight global powers meeting this week in Italy will unveil plans for a multilateral body to coordinate technical support for Internet use in developing countries, according to a Japanese newspaper.

The E-Development Resource Network would be established by January 2002 as the cornerstone of efforts by the industrialized nations to narrow the so-called digital divide with the rest of the world, the Mainichi newspaper said.

The plan will be featured in the final communique to be adopted at a three-day summit meeting of G8 leaders in the port city of Genoa beginning July 20, according to the Japanese daily, which did not cite sources.

Closing the technology gap between countries with developed Internet infrastructure and those that have just started to come online has been a prominent theme at recent G8 gatherings.

At last year's summit on the southern Japanese island of Okinawa, G8 leaders agreed to set up a Digital Opportunity Taskforce to help poor nations develop regulatory policy and increase Internet access.

The G8 consists of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States. *AP*

3Com captures Cisco share

REDWOOD City, California—The Dell'Oro Group has reported that 3Com Corp. has earned the highest growth rate worldwide in gigabit switched ethernet shipments at 131 percent quarter-to-quarter.

This growth enabled 3Com to increase its market share to 19.2 percent, while Cisco and other vendors' market share declined.

Also, Dell'Oro reported that 3Com's market share in the 10/100 megabits per second unmanaged switched ethernet segment grew to 20.2 percent.

3Com is on track to achieving its goal of earning leadership in the gigabit switched ethernet market and continuing leadership in the 10/100 mbps switched ethernet market.

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Consumer spending keeping US economy out of recession

WASHINGTON—US retail sales rose for the second straight month in June and consumer confidence strengthened in July, according to reports on Friday that suggested consumers might keep the economy out of a recession.

In another positive report, the government said prices at the wholesale level fell in June at the sharpest rate in more than two years. The data suggested inflation was under wraps, giving the Federal Reserve leeway to cut interest rates further if necessary to keep the US economic expansion on track.

Sales at US retail stores rose 0.2 percent to a seasonally adjusted $292.9 billion in June as consumers took advantage of aggressive incentives to purchase cars and heavy discounting at struggling retailers across the nation.

The gain in June followed a 0.4-percent rise in May.

In another report, the University of Michigan said consumer confidence rose in July as Americans became more optimistic about their financial futures despite continuing layoffs.

With consumer spending accounting for two-thirds of US economic activity, analysts said the data suggested consumers might prevent a US recession by hitting the shopping mall.

"The consumer is still with us, maybe not as rapid as we like, but still a significant contributor and may be the only factor keeping us out of negative territory," said Anthony Chan, chief economist at Banc One Investment Advisors in Columbus, Ohio.

Investors largely shrugged off the data. Stock prices inched higher on Friday as investors placed bets that the corporate earnings slump might be coming to an end.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 0.57 percent to 10,539.06, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq composite index increased 0.44 percent to 2,084.79.

The gain in retail sales in June was led by a boost in vehicle purchases. Sales of new cars and trucks climbed 1.5 percent to $72.88 billion following a 0.2-percent gain in May, the Commerce Department (news-websites) said.

Excluding new-car sales, which accounted for one-quarter of monthly retail business, overall retail sales actually fell 0.2 percent in June—the first such decline in three months—following a 0.4-percent gain in May.

Economists, however said that that number was likely negative due to lower gasoline prices and huge discounting at stores as retailers tried to cling on to customers in a sluggish economy. Retail sales are measured in value, not volume.

And analysts also noted that smoothing out monthly fluctuations, retail sales from April to June were up 6.1 percent at an annual rate, much higher than the 5.2 percent pace measured from January to March.

"This is just further evidence that the economy is leveling off," American Express Financial Advisors chief economist Dan Laufenberg said. "The economy has stopped deteriorating but there isn't a clear sign that it is rebounding dramatically."

The University of Michigan said its preliminary consumer sentiment index rose to 93.7 in July from 92.6 in June, extending a gradual rebound from a floor of 90.6 in February, its lowest level in nearly five years. *Reuters*

Ford recalls 1.4M cars to fix seat belt defects

WASHINGTON—Ford Motor Co. announced Friday that it would recall 1.4 million 2001 vehicles because some seat belt buckles might not latch properly.

The recall involves the Ford Crown Victoria, Windstar, Ranger, F-series trucks, Excursion and Expedition; the Mercury Grand Marquis; the Lincoln Town Car and Navigator; and Mazda B-series trucks. It includes all 2001 models built through May 26, when the supplier improved its manufacturing and testing process.

Ford said it had two reports of minor injuries because of the problem, but had not confirmed them.

Ford dealers will inspect the front driver side and passenger side seat belt buckles. The front center and all rear seat belt buckles are not affected, according to the automaker.

The buckles were made by TRW Inc. The company announced Friday that it planned to take an undisclosed charge in the second quarter 2001 to cover the recall cost.

Ann O'Neill, director of vehicle service and programs for Ford Customer Service Division, said the automaker estimated that less than 5 percent of the buckles might not latch if they were not pushed in hard enough.

"But even if a vehicle was to have a defective buckle, the potential for any safety issue is relatively small," she said in a statement.

She said customers could help latch the seat belts by pushing the tongue quickly and forcefully into the buckle, then pulling on it to make sure it was secure. *AP*

Women catch up in minority businesses

WASHINGTON—Nearly half of America's minority businesses have a female owner or co-owner, according to new data that show a growing number of female entrepreneurs. Women own almost four of every 10 black-owned businesses, the highest percentage of any minority group, says the Commerce Department report based on 1997 census data.

The female ownership rate was about a third in the other minority categories: Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native and Asians and Pacific Islanders.

There were about 3 million minority businesses, including more than 923,000 with female owners and 451,000 with women who owned half the firm, the report said. The Commerce Department said there was about 717,000 minority-women business owners in 1992.

Julie Weeks, director of research for the National Foundation for Women Business Owners, said the number of white women entrepreneurs was also growing, but not as fast.

"A number of women are taking skills that they would have used to manage their homes to manage businesses. A well-managed home is not that much different from a for-profit business," said Larry Smith, president of the Council for Economic and Business Opportunity. *AP*

AOL Time nears deal to buy IPC

LONDON—AOL Time Warner Inc. moved toward its first major acquisition in Europe on Friday as it stepped up talks to buy British magazine publisher IPC Media in a deal, industry sources said would top $1.4 billion.

Cinven, the UK venture capital firm that controlled IPC, confirmed widespread speculation that it was in talks with AOL Time Warner's magazine arm, Time Inc., over a deal industry sources said could be struck as early as this week.

After a long stretch of on-off talks, sources said the two sides were down to negotiating a cash price of between 1.1 billion and 1.25 billion pounds ($1.5 billion to $1.75 billion). If all goes well, executives would meet next Thursday to make a final decision.

"Cinven have put around 1 billion pounds into IPC, and since their equity is so small, the return on equity changes dramatically with every small increase over 1 billion pounds," one source said. "For Time Warner, this is small change."

IPC, Britain's biggest pure consumer magazine publisher whose titles include Loaded, would give AOL Time Warner an important foothold in Europe as it sought to broaden its international reach in the wake of its own merger last year.

AOL Time Warner, the world's biggest media group, declined to add to Cinven's statement.

Cinven has been looking for some time to sell IPC, whose 100 titles also include Marie Claire and Country Life. Cinven bought 56 percent of IPC from Anglo-Dutch publisher Reed Elsevier three years ago as part of a management buyout, which valued the company at 860 million pounds. *Reuters*

Motorola tops integrated circuit market

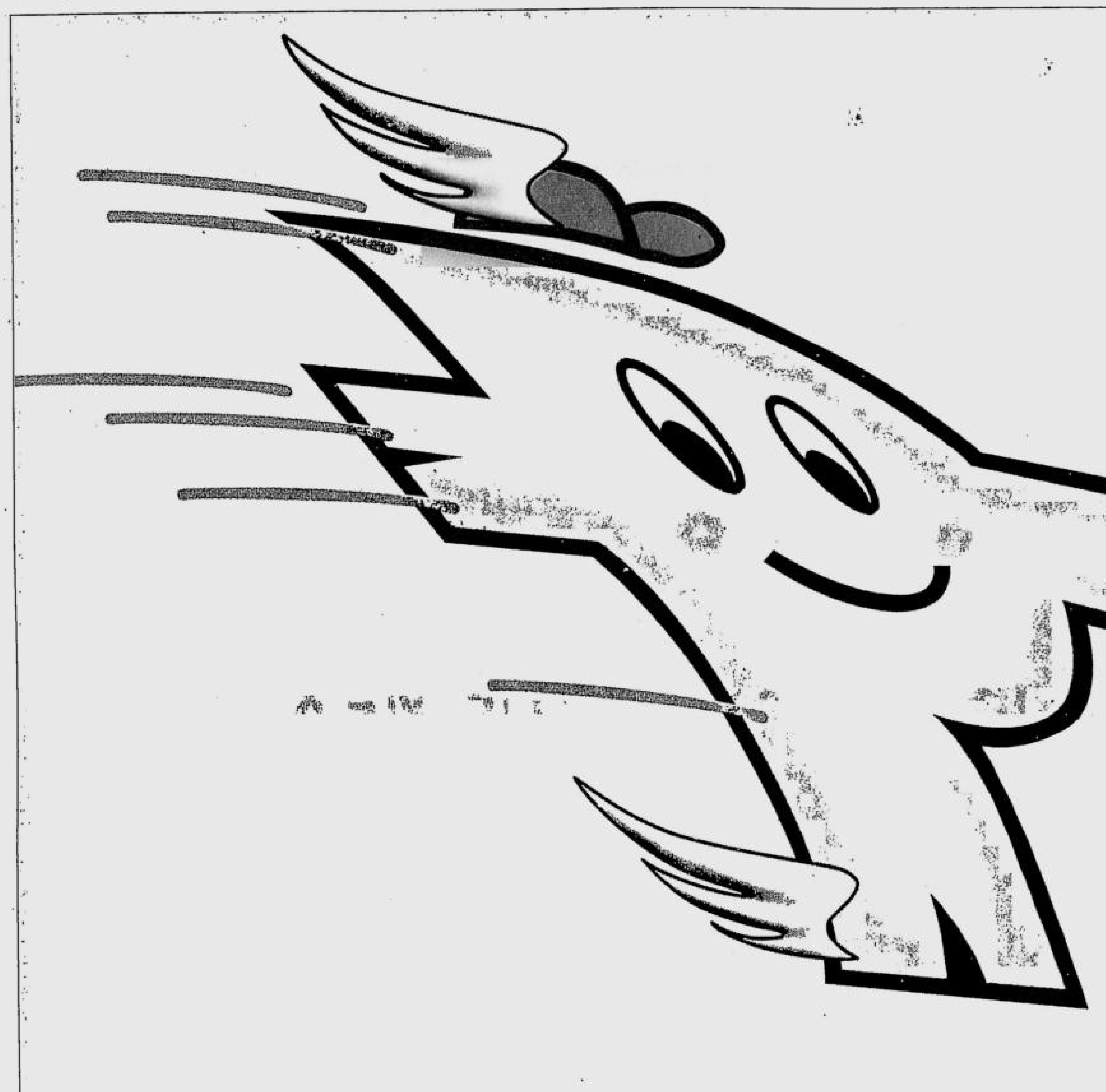
AUSTIN, Texas—A new Gartner Dataquest report has ranked the Semiconductor Products Sector of Motorola Inc. as market leader in integrated circuits for communications systems, highlighting Motorola's leadership in the fast-growing networking and communications market.

Motorola designs and manufactures processors and components that deliver the intelligence and power behind wired and wireless networks. Its customers include the world's top 10 networking equipment manufacturers.

Whether global consumers access the Internet from a wireless or wired device, Motorola has developed and built 80 percent of the semiconductors routing their data. In addition, hundreds of millions of Motorola communication ICs connect the world through mobile wireless products including cellular handsets, personal digital assistants, and pagers.

Motorola's wireless subscriber customers include seven of the world's top 10 mobile phone manufacturers.

Motorola's communications ICs include PowerPC host processors, C-5 network processors, Power QUICC integrated communications processors, DragonBall processors and RF and baseband transceivers based on advanced gallium arsenide technology.



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Webvan files chapter 11 protection

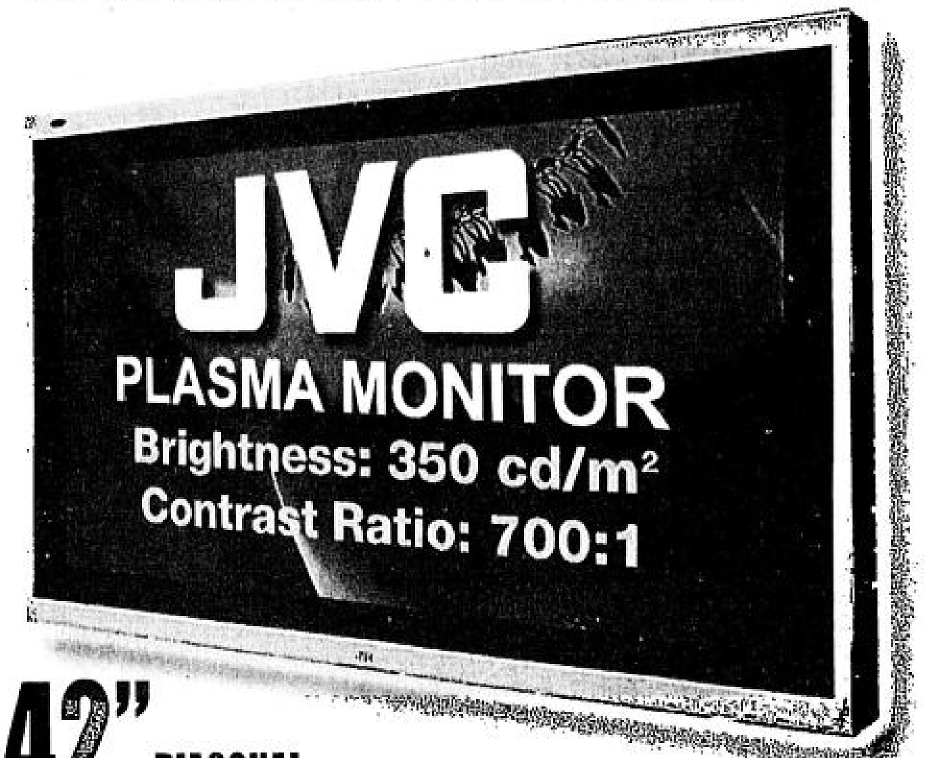
WILMINGTON, Delaware—Troubled online grocer Webvan Group Inc. and three affiliates filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Friday, as expected, after saying earlier in the day that the company would delist its stock, stop operations and terminate employment of its 2,000 workers.

According to papers filed in the US Bankruptcy Court in Delaware, where the Foster City, California-based company was incorporated, Webvan listed assets with a book value of $1.2 billion and debts of $106 million. However, the assets included $734 million in goodwill and other intangibles, court papers said.

Webvan, which was quoted on the Nasdaq exchange, has acknowledged that for the past several months it has been fighting for survival as its cash reserves ran low and operating costs proved higher than planned.

On Monday, chief executive officer Robert Swan said despite making significant progress in cutting its operating losses, the company decided to close down because of decreased orders and the difficulty of raising capital in the current economic climate.

"Webvan has weathered numerous challenges and in a different climate I believe that our business model would prove successful," Swan said Monday. "At the end of the day, however, the clock has run out on us." *Reuters*



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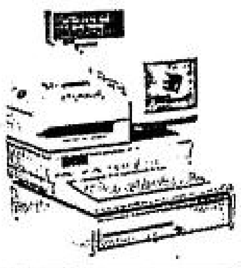

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CA heads oppose breakup of company

WANG

BY LEO MAGNO

ORLANDO, Florida—The chair and the president and CEO of Computer Associates International Inc. (CA) last week heavily criticized the proposal of dissident shareholder Samuel Wyly to break up the software company into four units along four product lines.

At a press conference held here, CA chair Charles Wang and Sanjay Kumar, the company's president and CEO, jointly slammed Wyly's proposal to the company's shareholders. Wyly is now engaged in a proxy fight by running a slate of board nominees to oust the incumbent management headed by Wang.

He is pushing for CA to be broken up into four independent companies. This at a time when the US appeals court overturned the decision for Microsoft Corp. to be broken into two companies.

''It is unfortunate that Mr. Wyly had to do this at this point in time,'' said Wang during the opening day of CA World being held at the Orange County Convention Center in this city. Wang said this at a time when CA's revenues are plummeting after restructuring its software licensing plan October last year, and shareholders are asking CA management to produce more results.

''We do not understand what are Mr. Wyly's motives, other than money,'' added Kumar. "It is an assault on our shareholders and customers."

Wyly, however, has maintained to the press that he is not competing with CA but is competing with its chair, Wang.

''In terms of track record, I am not competing with him,'' said Wang, who founded CA 25 years ago.

Kumar added that Wyly has never run any software company, which he means he lacks the management experience to become CA's board chair. Wyly, former chair of Sterling Software, sold the company to CA last year for $3.9 billion. Kumar, however, stressed that the company is operated by Sterling Williams, its president and CEO.

''Even if you ask former employees of Sterling Software, few of them would say that they ever saw Mr. Wyly at the office,'' Kumar said. "He never ran any software company and he doesn't know the software business. So his proposal to break up CA is absolutely illogical."

If Wyly wins the proxy fight for shareholders, he would break up CA into four independent units: database management, data storage, security and portals. Oddly enough, CA is in the middle of reorganizing, with focus on four brands namely Unicenter (enterprise management), BrightStor (storage), eTrust (security) and Jasmine (portal and knowledge management)—the same focus of the reorganization Wang and Kumar are doing but only on the brand level.

Wang admits that Wyly has a right to solicit votes for a new management board that could oust him, but says he won't go down without a fight.

''We are fighting this battle down to the last shareholder—from the smallest to the biggest—and we're pointed in the right direction to do this,'' said Wang, who has a 5-percent stake in CA.

Kumar added that he and Wang are confident that they have the support of at least 30 percent of the shareholders, and are working on wooing more. Wyly needs 51 percent of the votes in order for him to put up his own board and management team. However, Kumar stressed that none of Wyly's nominees for the board has ever experienced managing a software company.

Asked what their plans are if Wyly successfully gets the 51 percent of the votes, Kumar said: "If he succeeds, then we won't have a plan. It's gonna be his plan all the way."

CA is scheduled to hold a shareholders' meeting to elect the new board on Aug. 29.

Stability key to more IT investments in RP–Wang

BY LEO MAGNO

ORLANDO, Florida—The Filipinos' technical talent in information technology and their much-hyped proficiency in the English language are no match to the political and economic instability of the Philippines in its quest to become the e-services hub of Asia.

Charles Wang, founder and chair of Computer Associates International Inc., said the Philippines has a tremendous opportunity in the field of information technology, but a good business climate is still prerequisite to more foreign investments.

''What we are looking for are stable environments for investment and good companies to partner with,'' Wang said. "The Philippines has very good assets. The technology talent is tremendous. But you cannot always be a low-cost provider or export your people. Being the lowest cost provider in the food chain only means that someday someone will be lower. You have to get into commercialization of products."

Wang cited joint-venture projects CA has forged with Taiwan and Korea in the last three years, projects which ultimately led to software exports.

''Today, 90 percent of software products come from the United States,'' he said. "We see that there's an opportunity for Asia in terms of talent. But the missing ingredient is what to develop. How do you commercialize and 'productize' a technology? How do you distribute it, support and service the product on a global basis?"

Wang stressed that CA is not closing its doors on further investments in the country, and in fact asked the media to help spread the word that CA is looking for potential Philippine partners.

Recently, CA entered into an agreement with 1st E-Bank in the Philippines in a deal which will swap CA technology for equity in the electronic banking company.

However, the dipping peso value, the Abu Sayyaf kidnappings and political uncertainty do not help the cause of the country. Wang said a stable economic and political environment is foremost in the minds of investors.

''People don't want instability,'' he said. "(The United States) has gotten through all those bad years but eventually it stabilizes. We hope the same thing happens in all the countries we have investments in. Filipinos want stability. There's no question about that. You have all kinds of strife, and what you don't know is really unsettling. People and businesses don't know what will happen next—everybody fears about what's gonna happen next."

What is needed, Wang said, is a process in the midst of all the country's chaos. He cites the change of Philippine leadership through people power revolt as an example.

''In the United States, despite all the issues and problems, ultimately you could say that at the end of the day, there is a process,'' he said. "Throughout this whole Gore-Bush elections, we knew it would be decided and that we're going to live through that decision. There's a process. We're not going to take to the streets about it. And that's what people and businesses look for. We want stability. We want to be able to reap the rewards of our investment and build the local IT industry. You cannot do that in a climate of instability."

Earlier this year, Wang was in Manila and met with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Asked what they discussed in Malacañang, he said: "She wants to build the right climate so that global companies like CA would want to invest in the Philippines. I assured her that our whole strategy for the whole of Asia is that we look at each local IT market and help make that market strong.

''We believe that if the local market starts to produce products and services based on CA's underlying technology, then we will succeed. We're not in there to sell then sleep. We want to make an investment, and I assured her that that was our goal."

Asked about his opinion on how the Philippine IT market will turn out after having made equity agreements locally, Wang said: "Given the history (of the country), I would not even speculate. I just don't know, but I hope everything works out. I believe that it would stabilize, and I just hope that in the short term, nothing happens that would drastically alter the long term. People need to have security."

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Universal Net access bill seen to adversely affect small ISPs

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

SEN. Vicente Sotto III's universal access bill, which aims to encourage Internet service providers (ISPs) to set up shop in the provinces, would mean the demise of smaller players in the country, according to industry observers.

In Sotto's proposed legislation called the "Internet Universal Access and Liberalization Act of 2001," all ISPs will be required to put up "at least one provincial branch in a designated area" to be assigned by the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC). This would become a requirement for ISPs if they are to be granted certificate of registration by the NTC, observers say.

ISPs will only be exempted from this requirement if they decide to put up operations in the "service area" designated by the government agency.

Sotto proposed that these service areas should have no more than a single ISP in operation, have consumer demand for Internet access, and have the least presence of an available telecommunications infrastructure.

Once they are able to comply, ISPs are then "authorized" to deploy their Internet infrastructure for "exclusive use in delivering Internet services without the need for a congressional franchise, provided the infrastructure runs on broadband technology," according to Sotto.

''I think the biggest challenge is for the good senator to prove that the service area scheme (SAS) is desirable for ISPs, and results in universal access. I understand that SAS works in situations where the incumbent are allowed to operate in profitable areas on the condition that they serve 'missionary' areas," JJ Disini, lawyer and e-commerce expert said.

''In the case of (local) ISPs, the market is quite competitive and margins are getting slimmer. How can the bill justify imposing additional investment obligations upon them? Isn't this just adding another problem to the ISPs considering that the bill requires them to put money in areas where they're sure to lose it?" Disini added.

Disini believes that many ISPs will lose if the bill is passed because it would fail to protect smaller players.

''Only the bigger ones with the resources to invest in the required provincial branches will survive. The bill will remove some of the competition already existing. Also, with more ISPs going out of business, how will universal access be achieved?'' Disini said.

Nonong Vibar, president of local ISP Surf Shop, agrees.

In a separate interview, Vibar believes that lawmakers should focus on creating incentives rather than forcing ISPs to put up operations in far-flung areas under the guise of pushing for universal access.

''As it is now, it is really difficult to survive under today's current economic condition," he added.

Vibar's company, Surf Shop, was established in 1997 with a paid-up capital of P8 million.

For the past years, the company was able to survive because it kept its resources manageable. The ISPs' total number of subscribers is 2,000, or just enough to keep it afloat, Vibar said.

''Infrastructure (specifically cost of phone lines) is a fixed cost. We're very lucky to have survived for the past four years," Vibar said.

He lamented that the cost of telecommunications in the Philippines remains "outrageously" high.

He also said ISPs have a few options to choose from, noting that 30 to 40 percent of the company's capital expenditures go to the payment of phone lines alone.

Another bone of contention involves the bill requiring ISPs to deploy a broadband network.

''Assuming this is just a way for some ISPs to go around the telcos, and compete head to head, how many ISPs can really provide a broadband network? In other words, is this provision destined to become a dead letter law or designed for a designated minority (i.e., smaller cable companies)?'' Disini said.

Disini also argued that requiring ISPs to put up broadband networks will also discourage competition due to the high cost of building one's own network.

''Ideally, ISPs should be allowed to ride on each other's networks—this avoids conflicts-of-interest and presumably increases service levels to the consumer," he said.

3Com introduces new LAN switches

NETWORKING firm 3Com Corp. has recently unleashed its latest family of "radically simple" local area network switches at "drop jaw" prices.

The company's latest SuperStack 4000 series adds "an extra level" of network management that takes away the complexity out of networking solutions. 3Com's new family of switches also includes Web-based troubleshooting tools for managing the machines in the network.

The latest SuperStack 4000 series include the 4400, the 4300 and the 4005.

The 4400 is a so-called "application-ware" that pumps up to 6.6 million packets per second. Several of these machines could be stacked up to eight units and managed as a single machine with one IP address. It is designed to serve requirements of businesses (of different sizes). This mean machine is priced at $1,750 (in the United States).

Dragging cell(s) to another worksheet

By Jerry Liao

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Filipino Internet pioneer, entrepreneur dies

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

THE PHILIPPINES recently lost one of its Internet pioneers.

Willy Gan, founder and chair of the country's first commercial Internet service provider Mosaic Communications (MosCom), died on July 9 in California from a rare kind of cancer called renal cell carcinoma.

He was 55 years old.

''Dr. Gan peacefully passed away in California, where he was brought in May for treatment. But even in his last days, the chair of MosCom and Computer Network Systems made it clear that his vision for the company and the industry should remain," according to the official MosCom statement e-mailed to the INQUIRER.

The statement included an e-mail message from the United States by Gan's wife, Beta.

''Until the end, his thoughts were for MosCom and the industry," she said. "He made sure that even without him, there will be a team that will keep the MosCom network seamlessly functioning so that it can help boost the future of Philippine ICT (information and communications technology."

Together with William Torres, MosCom president, Gan launched the business venture back in 1994, a few months before the enactment of a law that provided a non-regulated environment for ISPs and other value-added resellers to set up shop.

Prior to that, Gan assisted the government-backed networking project to interconnect the country's major universities to the Internet.

For many years, Gan pushed the Internet and networking technologies in the Philippines, establishing various ventures, including the recent Internet data center facility called Mod.net.

Gan is a man with a long list of achievements. He is a businessman, a visionary, a teacher, an academician, and, most of all, a down-to-earth man who loves physics.

He also loves to read. Among his favorite authors is Michael Crichton.

Gan graduated magna cum laude at the University of the Philippines (UP). He later earned his masters and doctorate degree from the State University of New York (SUNY). In that university, he worked on various research projects, and was involved with Brookhaven National Laboratories and the Niels Bohr Institute.

For 20 years, he taught physics and computer science at UP, SUNY and Ateneo de Manila University. He eventually received training from Cisco Systems, which later provided him with the added technical expertise in networking.

GAN

Gan was also a member of the American Physical Society and Association for Computing Machinery. He heads the Internetworking Institute Inc., which facilitates advanced training and technology dissemination for internetworking operations.

Gan was also named by the local industry as one of the top 10 Internet pioneers.

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Text, not WAP, to drive mobile commerce

By Erwin Oliva
and Joey Alarilla

LOCAL wireless services start-up Mobile Arts Inc. last week disclosed plans of investing an estimated P108 million over the next five years to deliver wireless interactive messaging and value-added services in the Philippines.

Early this year, Mobile Arts signed exclusive partnership with Smart Communications and Pilipino Telephone Co. The company (formerly known as Mariex Inventures Corp.) now provides both local mobile phone operators the mobile e-mail service called TextMail. MobileArts officials said that the service now has over 340,000 subscribers after only five months. The company sees subscribers hitting 1 million by the end of 2001.

Asked what the killer application will be for the much-hyped mobile commerce revolution, Mobile Arts president Ramon Duremdes Jr. told the Inquirer: "TextMail. TextMail kills time and saves time," Duremdes said.

"For many local users, the mobile phone is their only e-mail device," Duremdes added.

Smart and Piltel subscribers are now able to text e-mail messages from their mobile phones to a computer.

While wireless application protocol (WAP) has received a lot of attention, officials admitted that WAP has been overhyped.

"That's why we didn't focus initially on WAP services," Elmar M. Gomez, director of Mobile Arts, told the Inquirer.

He said that while the company believes in the future of WAP services, their business is based on a per-use model, and the Philippines remains the text-messaging capital of the world.

"SMS (short message service or text messaging) will still be the standard platform for mobile services in the Philippines for the next five years," said Mylo C. Bonifacio, Mobile Art's corporate market business unit head.

Bonifacio said that WAP usage will increase as handsets become cheaper and services more affordable, particularly now that the always-on GPRS (general packet radio service) wireless technology is available. GPRS handsets, however, are still scarce and are only expected to really start taking off next year. After all, even the first-generation WAP has not taken off as fast as the hype projected, in the Philippines as well as in other countries.

A survey by research firm Taylor Nelson Sofres Interactive (TNS Interactive) estimates that 26.5 percent of the adult population in the Philippines has a mobile phone, of which 3.5 percent have WAP function.

This ranks the country 7th both in mobile phone ownership and WAP phone ownership among the eight countries surveyed in the Asia Pacific, according to the results of the study.

The TNS Interactive Asia Pacific M-Commerce Report was undertaken across eight countries in the Asia-Pacific region between December 2000 and February 2001. A total of 8,164 adults aged 15-65 have been interviewed via telephone. The countries surveyed include Australia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand.

Gomez explained that TextMail allows Filipinos to conveniently remain connected to friends and relatives abroad, even while on the go.

In the future, Mobile Arts will support "cross-media" messaging or unified messaging, which would allow messages to traverse any device, platform and format.

The company also intends to "custom-fit" mobile messaging for corporate clients.

"There is a universal need of people to be connected while on the move. No wonder mobile phone users worldwide have been growing at an extensive rate. Based on estimates, global mobile users outnumber desktop PCs, with estimates of about 772 million mobile phone users versus 400 million PCs. In the Asia Paficic alone, there are now 233 million subs, and rising to 609 million by 2005," Duremdes said.

The company projects to earn over P11.4 million in revenues by yearend. In a separate interview, however, Duremdes clarified that the company will only see a return on investments after three years.

By 2006, the company expects over P127 million revenues.

Meanwhile, Gomez said that most of the P108-million investment would be spent on servers.

"At least P90 million will go to the purchase of hardware (servers) for storage of information, redundant systems and capacity," Gomez said.

The company has coughed up at least P 5 million for the initial paid-up capital, Duremdes said.

Mobile Arts uses Linux-based systems running on Pentium-powered machines. It now maintains operations in Muntinlupa City, Alabang.

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo witnesses the launch of the Philippine Bar Association website at www.philbar.org during the 110th foundation day of the organization. Behind her are lawyers Manuel Barcelona Jr., J. Conrado Castro, Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. and Federico Agcaoili.

Huge potential for mobile Net in country–Asia Pacific report

AN ESTIMATED 26.5 percent of the adult population in the Philippines has a mobile phone of which 3.5 percent have WAP (wireless application protocol) function. This ranks the country 7th both in mobile phone ownership and WAP phone ownership among the eight countries surveyed in the Asia Pacific, according to the results of research released by Taylor Nelson Sofres Interactive (TNS Interactive).

Internet and WAP usage trends were surveyed in eight countries—Australia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand, and the resultant report allows direct country comparisons on product ownership, Internet access and WAP online behaviour. The results show that mobile commerce (m-commerce) has the potential to grow, where 57 percent of the adult population has a mobile phone, 14 percent of which have WAP function, according to the press statement.

The study also shows that in the Philippines 9.5 percent more people own mobile phones than personal computers—PC ownership is 17 percent. Mobile phone ownership is highest among the 15-24 age group and 25-49-year-olds in all the countries surveyed, although in less affluent countries like China, Thailand and Philippines, ownership is higher among the mid-age adults. This implies that mobile phone usage is for commercial and business purposes and also that young people in these countries do not have the purchasing power to own a mobile.

Other key findings include:

- Across all countries surveyed, Internet access averages 38 percent and is accessed mainly by young and male white collars or professionals with high personal income.
- Only 4 percent of Internet users in the Philippines access it via WAP phones and of those who do own a WAP phone, 14 percent use it to access the Internet.
- Eleven percent of respondents in the Philippines said that they would be "very likely" or "quite likely" to buy a WAP phone in the next 12 months.
- Nokia leads the mobile phone market in the Asia Pacific with a 31 percent share followed by Motorola (12 percent) and Ericsson (9 percent); leading the WAP phone market is again Nokia, followed by Panasonic and Motorola.

Call center providers get creative in face of slump

THE PRESENT economic slump has generally slowed down business in the Philippines, including the call center solutions sector, an executive said.

"Putting up a simple call center would cost companies at least P5 million nowadays. And this is just a basic facility that acts as customer support," said Thadeus Villasor, business development officer of Equicom Systems Management (ESM).

Established in 1997, ESM is a joint venture of Equitable Computers and Canadian firm Telus.

For the past months, ESM had difficulties finding clients who are willing to "sign on the dotted line."

The company currently provides call center solutions to Equitable Visa and Equitable Fast Phone.

ESM is contemplating renting out its solutions in exchange for a monthly fee, or opting for leasing options, according to Villasor.

"We have server farms where clients can connect to. They won't have to spend for software licenses and hardware. But this idea is still on paper," he added.

The company is also looking at tapping companies abroad wanting to outsource their call center requirements.

In the Philippines, it is estimated to be at least a $10.5-million market, according to Jennifer Howe, director of CEM Asia, citing a Frost and Sullivan study.

"Investments on facilities like call centers should ideally retain at least 30 percent of a company's customers," Villasor said.

Howe, for her part, said that the challenge lies in convincing organizations that call centers contribute to the bottom line.

"Asia is still an immature market. I'm not saying that as a criticism. It shows that the market is just beginning to learn about it," she added.

Toby Melissa Monsod, assistant secretary for IT of the Department of Trade and Industry, pointed out that Asia is emerging as a source of significant outsource service operations from the United States and the Europe.

The Philippines, in particular, is now becoming a specific alternative to India, she added, citing an IDC call center services forecast and analysis study for 2001 to 2005. *Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva*

Total connectivity in a real 24/7 environment

Convergence is described as the melding of voice, video and data into one distribution channel. Its introduction has changed not just communications technology and services, but even how people live and work.

True convergent network technology is what sets the 18.7-hectare Northgate CyberZone (NCZ) apart from other I.T. parks. Combining convergent technology with NCZ's true broadband infrastructure creates the most advanced IP-based (Internet protocol) infrastructure in the Philippines.

Responsible for the operation of this world-class, high-speed IP backbone is Northgate Convergence Corporation (NCC), a PEZA-registered Ecozone Utilities Enterprise authorized to provide bandwidth, communication lines, Internet facilities and related support services to the zone's locators. Through its NCZ-dedicated Network Operations Center, NCC guarantees full technical and maintenance support backed by experienced network engineers, strategic consultants and I.T. personnel.

Investing more than P100 million for Northgate CyberZone's telecommunications infrastructure, NCC has deployed the first Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) technology via fiber optic facilities in the country. The ATM network has the capacity to transmit and receive information at varying speeds (from 155 Mbps to 622 Mbps) depending on the needs of the locators. Through the ATM backbone, NCC provides various solutions and services to locators such as high-speed Internet, Virtual Private Networking, web hosting, data collocation, IP video conferencing and streaming media.

To provide the 24/7 environment that technology-based companies require, the network has the following features:

• *Fault tolerant environment* – The reliable convergent network is the ideal set-up for businesses that rely on the Internet for e-commerce and collaboration. All single points of failure have been eliminated by the use of redundant paths and critical components for 99.99% network reliability within the zone.

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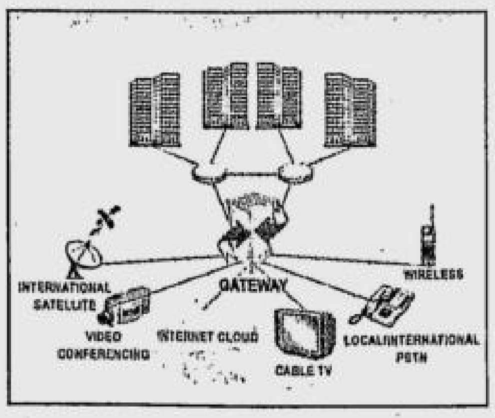


• *Scalability designed for future bandwidth* – The IP network is fully upgradable and "future-proof" to allow it to handle expansions and emerging technologies.

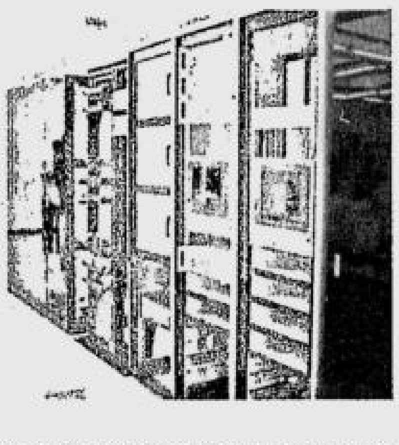
• *Wide availability of communications carriers* – NCZ's status as an economic zone allows a telco neutral environment. This translates to lower costs, better service and greater level of redundancy for locators. PLDT, Globe, Digitel and Eastern Telecoms will be providing services within the zone.

• *IP-based network* – While others rely on hybrid technology, NCZ's IP-based network is built as an end-to-end solution and from the ground up for true IP technology with an ATM core.

• *Open Standard* – The network supports all types of applications and caters to diverse traffic requirements. This ensures compatibility with locators' equipment and applications.

• *Security* – With the latest technologies and procedures in securing data and networks, locators need not worry about unauthorized entry into their networks.

• *Value-added services* - A complete range of business solutions includes a data center to host and efficiently manage locators' current and future business applications. This will significantly reduce network management costs as well as provide access to a telco-class data center without the considerable expense of building one's own.



Northgate CyberZone's convergent network is capable of accommodating the elaborate requirements of technology-based companies in software development, multimedia, call centers, data centers and I.T. divisions of companies engaged in venture capital, legal, services and accounting. With access to world-class telecommunications infrastructure at reasonable rates, the bottom line for locators is maximum productivity, profitability and global competitiveness at par with the rest of the world.

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14 million US workers under office surveillance

WASHINGTON—Some 14 million employees in the United States have their Internet or e-mail use under constant surveillance at work, according to a report this week by the Privacy Foundation.

Worldwide, the number of employees under surveillance is estimated at 27 million, the advocacy group said.

The report focused on continuous, systematic monitoring of employees, rather than random spot checks, which according to other research is even more widespread.

The Denver-based foundation said inexpensive technology, more than any other factor, is driving the growth in workplace monitoring.

But the reasons given by employers in the past for the monitoring of Internet use and e-mail include productivity concerns as well as liability for sexual harassment or other employee misbehavior online, the report said.

"Employee monitoring, as measured by the sales of surveillance software, has increased at least twice as fast as the number of US employees with Internet access in the past few years," the foundation said.

"Worldwide sales of employee-monitoring software are estimated at $140 million a year, or about $5.25 per monitored employee per year."

But the report also said that increased monitoring may in fact be putting employers at greater risk of liability.

"By creating and storing a detailed audit trail of employee activities, organizations may be inadvertently stockpiling large amounts of potential evidence that could be used against them in future litigation," the foundation said.

"This is particularly significant in government offices, where logs and reports produced by employee monitoring may be considered public records and accessible under Freedom of Information Act requests."

The foundation's chief researcher, Andrew Schulman, said companies may not be giving employees adequate information about surveillance.

"Notice alone might not go far enough," Schulman said.

"Companies and government agencies are basing firing and suspension decisions on the employee-monitoring reports. Yet, employees are generally not told beforehand what information will be gathered and how it will be judged. Companies can use employee-monitoring logs as a kind of wishing well to justify actions against employees, including dismissals and layoffs." *AFP*

PhilDAC offers compromise; 'PH' admin won't budge

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

THE PHILIPPINE Domain Authority Convenors (PhilDAC) last week offered a way to resolve the controversy hounding the administration of the Philippine country-code top-level domain.

The organization sent a letter to the current .PH administrator, Jose Emmanuel Disini, asking him to agree to a compromise deal, which it labeled as a "win-win" solution, according to a press statement.

PhilDAC claimed that the Internet Society of the Philippines (Isoc), Philippine Internet Service Organization (Piso) and the Philippine League for Democratic Telecommunications signed the proposed compromise deal.

In an interview, however, Disini said that "any talk of a compromise deal is inappropriate until government resolves consumer issues involving the company."

"We want the consumer issues resolved first and foremost," Disini, DotPH CEO, told the Inquirer.

He added that the offer of a compromise at this time is "premature." They would rather wait for the Department of Trade and Industry's ruling on the consumer-related issues.

At least 15 complaints had been filed at the Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection under the DTI, according to Disini.

In the proposed compromise deal, PhilDAC urged Disini to open up the market for competition, thereby allowing other registrars to sell the .PH domain. It also wanted DotPH to allow competition to start operations after one year, thereby giving the company time to recoup its investments.

Disini, however, pointed out that there have been around 150 "registrars" of .PH for more than a year. "And we're actively courting more," he added.

The organization also wanted Disini to "get a second-level domain to accommodate his dotPHone initiatives to link Internet addresses with mobile phones."

At this time, dotPHone is only available using the flat .PH domain.

PhilDAC stressed it is not interested in taking Disini's business away from him, but wants the right to establish domain name policy transferred from an individual to a representative group.

"The compromise deal is a redelegation in disguise," Disini said. He claimed that he already pushed that idea of setting up a policy advisory board before, but PhilDAC thumbed it down.

Still, PhilDAC maintained that .PH domain should not be treated as Disini's personal property.

"We only want the policy-making aspect of Internet domains to be reassigned. Nothing more, nothing less," the organization said. Disini questioned the sincerity of this statement.

PhilDAC was organized in April 2001 with the main objective of pushing for redelegation. The group wants a "non-profit foundation" to become the administrator of the .PH domain.

The issue is important because whoever is the Philippine domain administrator is responsible for setting policies about the allocation and use of Internet addresses that have the .PH (Philippines) extension. For example, the domain administrator determines how much local companies will pay to register websites with the .PH extension," the group said.

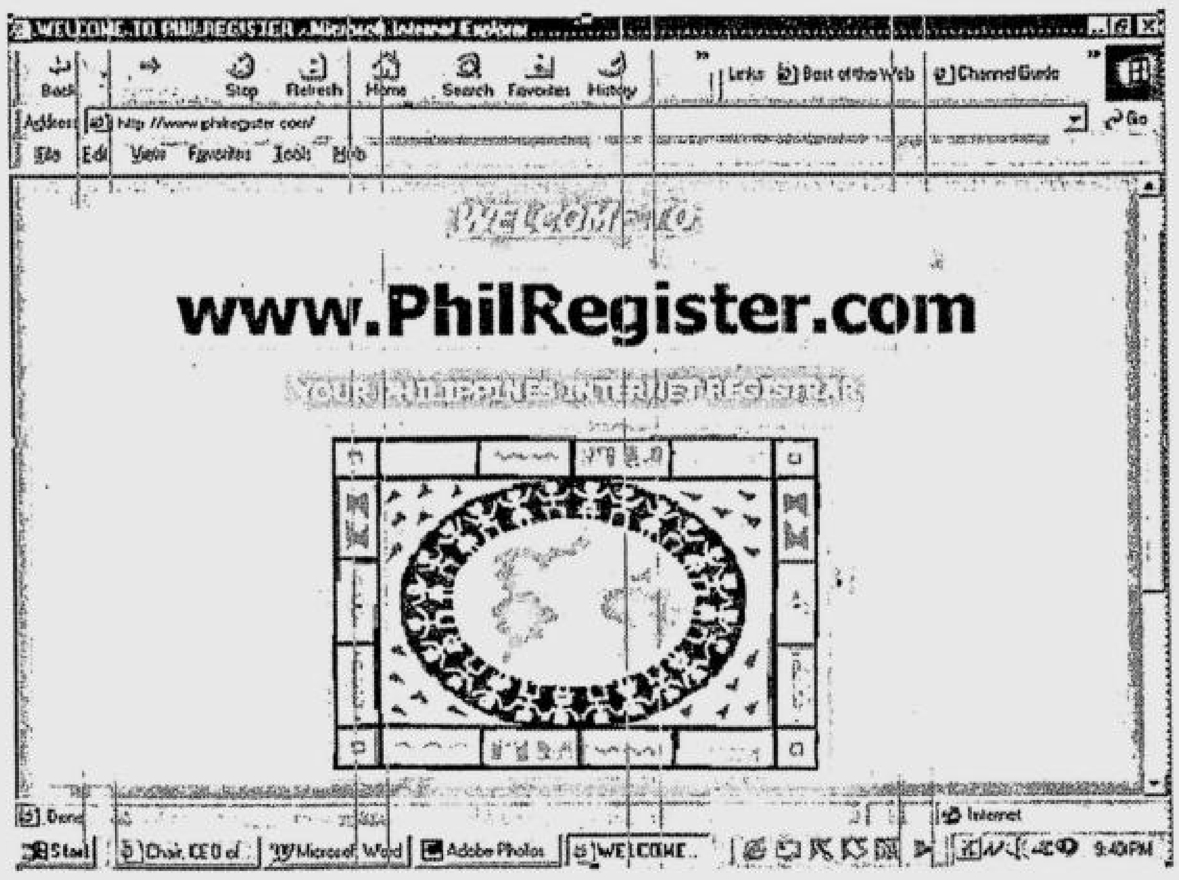
Disini obtained the right to administer the domain in 1990 from the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority, and has been running the registry as a privately owned business. PhilDAC, reflecting efforts since 1994, wants the PH domain redelegated to a non-profit foundation that would be more representative of the local Internet community. Disini has resisted all attempts to have the domain reassigned.

"We are aware that redelegation may affect (Disini's) business of selling domain names," said Fernando Contreras Jr., PhilDAC spokesperson and Interdotnet Philippines country manager, said in a statement. "That's why our proposal will give him enough time to recoup his investments."

Disini filed a libel suit against Contreras on May 29. He is seeking $1 million in moral damages and $1 million in exemplary damages from Contreras.

RP firm offers domain name for businesses

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva



WHEN the Internet was invented back in 1969, every computer connected to the Internet was identified by an address expressed in a combination of numbers.

However, numbers were confusing. Besides, ICANN or the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (then called the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority) believed that it would soon run out of number combinations to ascribe to Internet addresses.

So the organization decided to switch to the alphanumeric system which uses a combination of numbers and words. This system thus became known as the Internet domain name system.

To make the domain name system more organized, it was decided that the domain name ".com" would stand for commercial entities, ".gov" for government, ".net" for network companies, and so on.

The "first-come, first-serve" principle was implemented, which meant that anyone who had a unique domain name, say, erwinoliva.com, can register the name at a global top-level domain name registrar like Network Solutions for a fee.

Initially, the system made no attempt to determine whether someone else rightfully owns the domain name, giving rise to cybersquatters or "virtual" swindlers buying hundreds of Internet domain names with the purpose of selling it later to a company or, in this case, the individual that wants to use it.

These enterprising virtual trademark thieves were notorious. They bought domain names of well-known companies, celebrities, politicians, and common words such as furniture, sex, etc., with the thought of selling it at an outrageous price.

To this day, many well-known companies still don't own the Internet domain names that carry their trademark or company brand.

In the Philippines, some examples include ayala.com, sanmiguel.com, megaworld.com and even inquirer.com. Inquirer.com has been registered by the Philadelphia Inquirer, a US-based newspaper.

Ayala.com, for instance, takes one to a site run by Netidentity, a website that offers customized e-mail and Web address services.

Sanmiguel.com, on the other hand, takes you to a Web-based chat room.

Unfortunately, domain names serve as a company's portal to global recognition on the Internet. The domain name is considered one's virtual address to the global village.

"The .com domain name is often misclassified. Anyone could just register and have a .com domain even though they're not a commercial entity," says Adriel Mirto, vice chair of Philippine register.com.

As of the latest count, there are more than 22 million "dotcoms" registered worldwide. And the number is growing exponentially.

Recently, ICANN has created new domain names partly with the intent of minimizing domain name "grabbing" or cybersquatting. It decided to designate ".biz" as a domain name specific for business entities.

"The .biz domain name is mainly for businesses. It aims to protect brand names and trademarks," Mirto said.

Beginning Oct. 1, individuals or large corporations can register under the .biz domain name through more than 80 registrars worldwide.

Philregister.com has recently secured accreditation from ICANN, making it the first Philippine-based registry of .biz domain name, according to Mirto.

Philippine register.com would be offering a service that aims to prevent cybersquatting, called "IP Claim."

For $90, companies or even individuals can "claim" IP rights to their registered, applied for, or common law trademarks or service marks prior to the start of the .biz domain name application and selection.

The IP claim service began May 21 and will last until Aug. 6, 2001.

"If ever there's a dispute, the domain name will be freezed for 30 days after the .biz domain is made available globally on Oct. 1 under the IP claim service," Mirto said.

Reservations for the .biz domain has already began last July 5 and will end Sept. 30.

Companies can pay a $5 non-refundable reservation fee. The .biz domain will cost $70 for two years, according to Mirto.

All .biz domain names will be managed by NeuLevel, the ICANN-designated global registry for the .biz domain name.

Siemens aims for 2nd spot in Apac

THE SIEMENS Information and Communication Mobile Group (IC Mobile) plans to step up its commitment to the Asian market, with the aim of becoming No. 2 in the Asian mobile communication market (without Japan and Korea).

To cope with rapidly growing demand in the Asian mobile radio market, Siemens is investing $60 million for expansion of annual production capacity in Shanghai from 10 to 14 million mobile devices.

Siemens IC Mobile will be investing $250 million in extending the three newly established Centers of Competence by mid-2003. This will create an additional 320 new jobs in Beijing, Shanghai and Singapore.

Siemens currently holds 12 percent of the mobile market in the Asia Pacific and 13 percent in the People's Republic of China, the biggest single market for mobile phones in the Asia Pacific.

In the second phase of its $1.5-billion investment program in the Asia Pacific, IC Mobile will further raise this year's production capacity in Shanghai.

Three R&D centers already established in Beijing, Shanghai and Singapore are now being extended. Alongside the 150 jobs that IC Mobile created in the first step, approximately 320 new jobs will be established.

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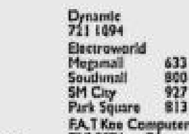

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Baler QC L3000 w/Hse Rollin New Mla L625 V Lot New Mla L280 2Stry Call 928-1469

Bnwe Malaya RUSH 7314018

Corinthian San Juan 30M Neg. LA630m² • 658-2410

Novaliches 360T T9358850

PHILAM Q.C. 13M TEL. 915-5177

Sct Townhse Well Maintain P3.5M Only • 928-3267

Shoehorn Proj.8, QC 203m² 2sty w/attic • 928-3267

RIZAL

Valley View Exec. Cainta Rizal - Bungalow, Townhse, Split level read'l hse 658-2115/16

PROVINCIAL

EagleRidge LT/SH 645-9931

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OTHER AREAS

CanyonWoods Btngas 7.5M ownrlvng neg0917-8143792

LOT

MAKATI

Comm'l/Ind'l LOT Nr. Ford Motor 637-6847 • 633-7601

MANILA

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MARIKINA

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PARANAQUE

Exec.Heights Brgy.Sunvalley LA306m² 2M 0917-8143792

PASIG

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QUEZON CITY

Capitol Homes QC 551sqm Call 0919-4227654

Nr. Baler SFDM QC 445m² V/Lot w/Fence • 928-3267

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180m² FOLIAGE COTTONWDS T9118555 09177315674

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OTHER AREAS

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REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TWNHSE/APT

MAKATI

Antel Platinum Valero Mktl 40.5m² w/Prkng Lot 658-2115/16

· C5 Nr. The Fort 988T 2BR 10T Mo/ 3 Yrs No Int. RFO 0919-3224760 • 1481-769894

Ortigas Renaissance 3BR Salcedo Makati 2-3BR (632) 533-5525; 0919-7847640

MANILA

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Antel Seaview Roxas Blvd Stud 2.2M terms ok 928-3267

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Rush! Pioneer Highlands 2BR3.8MDBO09178143792

Various Wack² Condos Lee Gardens 534-6610 Jojo

Wack² Royal Mansion Studio P1.5M 633-7601/03

Wack² Royal Mansion Studio P1.5M 633-7601/03

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86m² OMM Bldg. Ortigas Center Raquel • 634-1212

D. JUANA PASIG TEL 915-5177

Offc Condo 220m² w/2 Prkg Tektite Raquel • 634-1212

Rush! Renaissance 2000 DBO 2br+2tb 09178143792

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QUEZON CITY

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SAN JUAN

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MANILA

Abad Santos 12T 7816319

QUEZON CITY

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MANDALUYONG

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SAN JUAN

4BR3TB nr SJ Ch 25T 7255582

West Greenhills, LA 975 FA 600 4BR, Den Guest Rm, S-Pool, Lanai, Garden, 7 Car Grge P100T/sqm 6812457

MAKATI

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BSA TWR 1BR FF 30T Bnew 412-1825 ; 0917-7914366

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APARTMENT

MANDALUYONG

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Ortigas Ctr Parc Royale 1BDRM Furn. CP 0919-4037225

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VVerde 6 3BR P35T 723-2391

QUEZON CITY

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Apartment NR SM City Proj.7 2BR P7T 4163385

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CONDO/TWNHSE

SAN JUAN

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OTHER AREAS

Tiffany Mansion 2BR 25T /mo. FF No Pkg 815-0298

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

FOR LEASE

FOR LEASE

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
MINES AND GEOSCIENCES BUREAU
Region Office No. 8, Tacloban City

NOTICE OF APPLICATION OF ESTEBAN E. CALICOY, JR. (Name of Company/Individual) FOR MINERAL PRODUCTION SHARING AGREEMENT

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Section 38 of DENR Administrative Order (DAO) No. 96-40, Series of 1996, the Implementing Rules and Regulation of Republic Act No. 7942, otherwise known as the "Philippine Mining Act of 1995", **Esteban E. Calicoy, Jr.** with office address at **Brgy. 1, Balangiga, Eastern Samar, Philippines**, has filed an application/proposal for **Mineral Production Sharing Agreement Application** for the exploration, development, and utilization of certain **Gold, Silver, and other minerals**, particularly described as follows:

I - Application No. : **APSA-000079-VII**
II - Date of Filing : **April 18, 2001**
III - Area Location : **Balangiga, Eastern Samar**
IV - Technical Description of the Area *#

Corner Number	Latitude	Longitude
1	11-08-00	125-23-30
2	11-08-00	125-21-30
3	11-10-00	125-21-30
4	11-10-00	125-22-05
5	11-09-30	125-22-05
6	11-09-30	125-22-20
7	11-09-20	125-22-30
8	11-08-30	125-22-50

***Exceptions:** The proposed Contract Area shall be subject to Section 19 of RA 7942 and Section 15 ("Areas Closed to Mining Locations") and Section 16 ("Ancestral Lands"), of DENR Administrative Order No. 96-40, Series of 1996. Among other things:

a) The following shall be closed to mining locations: areas with valid and existing mining rights; existing mining applications; and areas expressly prohibited by law;

b) The following shall also be closed to mining locations except upon the written consent of the concerned government agency or private entity subject to the evaluation and validation by the Bureau: areas near or under public or private buildings, cemeteries, archeological and historical sites, bridges, highways, waterways, railroads, reservoirs, dams or other infrastructure projects, public or private works including plantations or valuable crops.

c) Applications for mineral agreements or financial or technical assistance agreements covering; small scale mining areas; civil or military reservations; areas covered by Certificate of Ancestral Domain claims; or areas of ancestral land as may be defined by law shall require prior written consent of concerned individuals, groups or other government agencies having jurisdiction over the area/s applied for.

#Notes 1. The approval of an Environmental Clearance Certificate, with all the necessary public consultations, shall be required prior to any and all mining construction development and production.

2. The Notice must be accompanied by a map/sketch plan with index map showing the nearest municipality(ies) and any major environmental feature(s).

(See Annex "A")

V - Size of the Area : **755.09 hectares more or less**
VI - Duration of the Agreement : **25 Years**

1. Exploration Period - shall have a term of two (2) years renewable for another two (2) years each but in no cases shall exceed a total of six (6) years;
2. Total duration of the Agreement shall be twenty five (25) years from the date of execution, subject to renewal for a another period not to exceed twenty five (25) years under the same terms and conditions subject to changes mutually agreed upon by both parties and provided further, that such terms and conditions are not inconsistent with law and do not prejudice the principle of sustainable development.

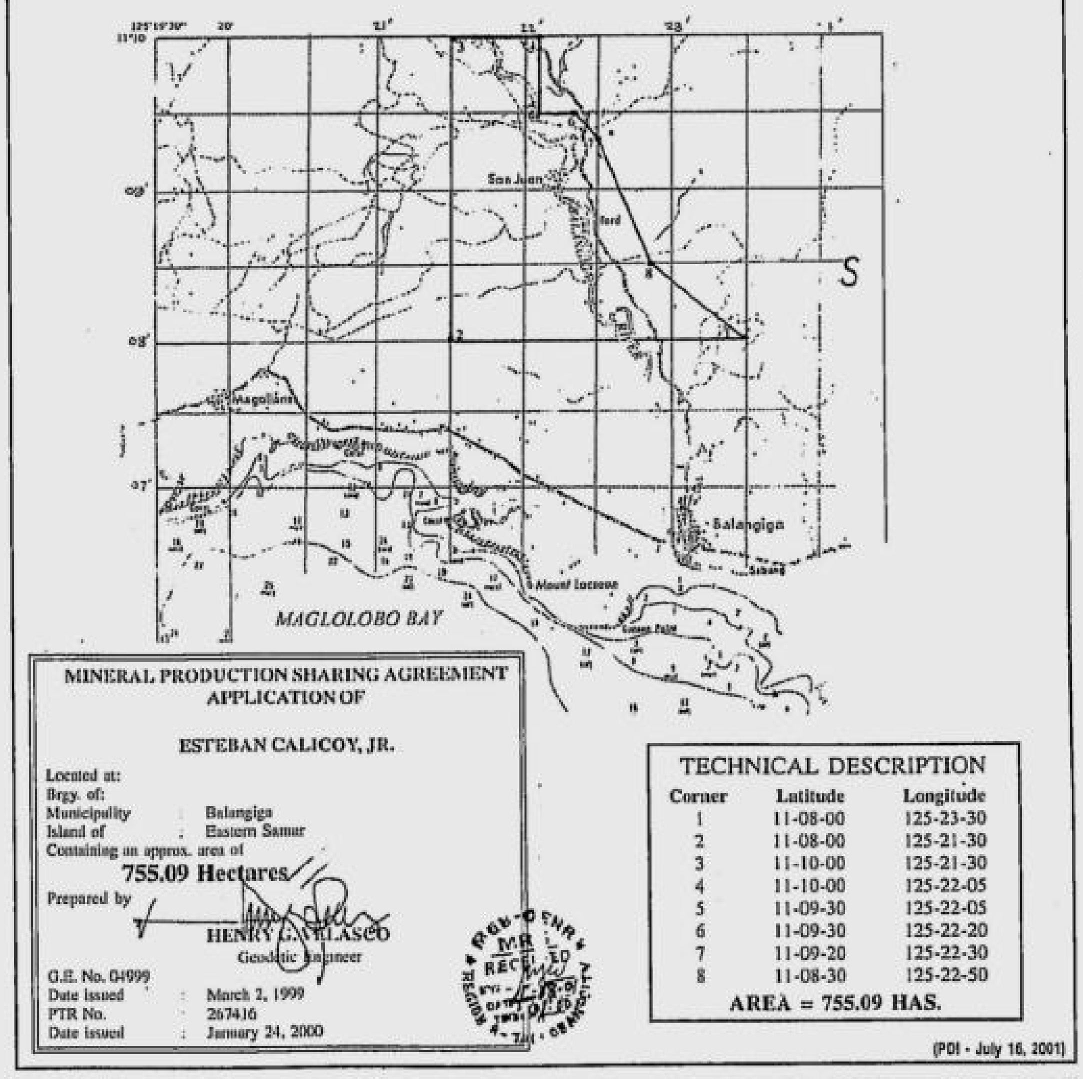
VII - Extent of Operation to be Undertaken

Exploration, Utilization and Development of Gold, Silver, and other minerals

Any and all persons having adverse claims, protests and or opposition to the above mentioned application are hereby notified that their adverse claims should be filed within thirty (30) days from the last date of publication/posting, directly with the Regional Office concerned or through any concerned Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) or Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office of the DENR for filing in the Regional Office for purposes of its resolution by the Panel of Arbitrators and/or the concerned appellate body(ies) pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act 7942 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations. Adverse claims, protests or opposition should be accomplished in accordance with Sections 203 and 204 of DENR Administrative Order No. 96-40, Series of 1996 and a copy thereof shall be furnished to the applicant/contractor by the adverse claimant.

For further particulars, apply or course your inquiries to **The Regional Director, Mines and Geosciences Bureau, Regional No. 8, Nipa Hut Compound, Lopez Jaena Street, Tacloban City.**

(Sgd.) **ELIGIO Z. ARIATE**
Regional Director



MINERAL PRODUCTION SHARING AGREEMENT
APPLICATION OF

ESTEBAN CALICOY, JR.

Located at:
Brgy. of:
Municipality : Balangiga
Island of : Eastern Samar
Containing an approx. area of
755.09 Hectares
Prepared by
HENRY G. VELASCO
Geodetic Engineer
G.E. No. 04999
Date issued : March 2, 1999
PTR No. : 267416
Date issued : January 24, 2000

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

Corner	Latitude	Longitude
1	11-08-00	125-23-30
2	11-08-00	125-21-30
3	11-10-00	125-21-30
4	11-10-00	125-22-05
5	11-09-30	125-22-05
6	11-09-30	125-22-20
7	11-09-20	125-22-30
8	11-08-30	125-22-50

AREA = 755.09 HAS.

(POI - July 16, 2001)

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STAREX L3 9121809/7268308

UDrive Carsvans 8006595

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The Board of Trustees,
the Faculty, the Staff, and the
Student Body of the Northwestern Academy
of Pampanga express the deepest condolences
to the Family of the late

Dr. Francisco R. Reyes, Sr.

Its Founder, Chairman of the Board of Trustees and President who lived a good life from March 5, 1914 and passed away last July 15, 2001.

His body lies in state at the Church of the Risen Lord, U.P. Diliman, Quezon City from July 15, 2001 to July 17, 2001 and will be transferred to the Ascomo United Methodist Church at Ascomo, Guagua, Pampanga on Wednesday, July 18, 2001 at 5:00 o'clock in the morning.

Interment will be on Saturday, July 21, 2001 at the Family Mausoleum of the Lord's Garden Memorial Park after the Necrological Service at the Ascomo United Methodist Church at 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

Sñr. Prof. German San Agustin

Peacefully joined his Creator on July 14, 2001 at the age of 85.

His remains lie in state at Nacional Memorial Homes (Chapel 3-B) #264 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, July 17, 2001 at Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque City at 10:00 a.m.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

Rafael (Paito) B. Jacob

Died in the Grace of our Lord on July 13, 2001 at the age of 62.

Family, Relatives & Friends request the pious readers to pray for his soul.

His body lies in state at Chapel 3, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

Burial follows a Mass Offering at 8:30 a.m., Wednesday, July 18, 2001.

Our Beloved "NANAY"

TEOFILA "PILANG" SOLIMAN SALONGA

December 18, 1930 — July 13, 2001

has joined our Tatay "**OMPONG** (†)" and brother "**REYNOLD** (†)" in infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord at the age of 70.

Her bereaved children **AIDA & ABET, DANNY & DITAS, BETH & JET, SUSAN & ED, AZON & EDWARD, TRINING & FLOR**; grandchildren; relatives and friends request for prayer for her eternal happiness.

Her remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, 12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Thursday, July 19, 2001 at Eternal Gardens Memorial Park after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

Rolando Roda Andaya

Wish to convey our sincerest gratitude and appreciation to our relatives, friends and all those who condoled with us, offered Masses, sent flowers and messages of sympathy, kept vigil, were present at the Necrological services, novena Masses, funeral rites and who in countless ways, provided strength and comfort during our time of bereavement.

May God grant you abundant blessings for your thoughtfulness.

---

*In my Father's house are many mansions
..... I go to prepare a place for you.*
John 14:12

Dr. Francisco R. Reyes, Sr.

Former Mayor of Guagua, Pampanga

of Pulungmasle, Guagua, Pampanga
Born on March 5, 1914 and died on July 15, 2001.

He is survived by his bereaved wife **Josefina S. Nacu**; children **Nelly** and **Leven S. Puno Sr.**, **Nenita** and **Jaime T. Santos**, **Rodolfo** and **Teresita Co Gonzales**, **Helen** (†) and **Ernesto Miranda** (†), **Francisco Jr.** and **Lilia Tan**, **Josefina** (**Baby**) and **Rudy C. Jingco**, **Victoria** and **Joel S. Elises**, **Cynthia**, **Gilbert** and **Rubi Consunji**; sister-in-law **Dorotea Goseco Vda. de Reyes**; grandchildren, great grandchildren, nephews, nieces and other relatives.

His remains lie in state at the U.P. Church of the Risen Lord from July 15, 2001 to July 17, 2001 and will be transferred to the Ascomo United Methodist Church, Pulungmasle, Guagua, Pampanga on July 18, 2001 at 5:00 a.m.

Interment at the Family Mausoleum Lord's Garden Memorial Park will take place on Saturday, July 21, 2001 after the Necrological Service at 1:00 p.m. at the Ascomo United Methodist Church.

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RTW 4 Tiange Bazar 3738821

We would like to inform you that the Board of Directors of Canyon Woods Resort Club, Inc. ("CWRC") in its special meeting held on 14 June 2001, has decided to hold the annual meeting of the stockholders of CWRC, which was previously deferred, on 29 July 2001 at 10:00 am at the Main Dining Hall, Main Clubhouse, Canyon Woods Resort Club, Inc. Diokno Highway, Laurel, Batangas. The agenda for the meeting as approved by the Board of Directors is attached hereto. The Board of Directors also set the record date for the annual stockholders' meeting to be 2 July 2001.

(PDI–July 16, 2001)

PUBLIC NOTICES

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PUBLIC NOTICES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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We Build 4 U ! Best Deals 1000GPD-250T ; 1500 GPD 315T 2000 GPD-365T Cash Terms 437-5356,438-5134 ZZECTRA

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE is given that the estate of the late ISAMI KAMADA had been extrajudicially settled by the heirs as per Doc.#435, Page #87, Book 1, Series of 2001 by Notary Public Atty. Benedicta F. Barrientos.
(PDI-July 2, 9 & 16, 2001)

INVITATION FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES

Cotton Council International, the export and promotions arm of the US cotton industry and licensor of the COTTON USA mark, would like to invite interested public relations firms to submit a Letter of Intent for consultancy services. As its prospective public relations arm in the Philippines, Cotton Council International will require consultancy services for the following:

- **Strategy development of its marketing and public relations program in the country, which will service CCI's accredited licensees as well as its end consumers. This will include promotions, media releases and brand awareness of the COTTON USA mark.**
- **Implementation of the developed marketing and public relations program.**

*Interested parties may send a letter outlining their experience and qualifications to Mr. Jeff Coey, Regional Director for China and Southeast Asia, 20/F Zoroastrian Bldg., 101 Leighton Road, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong tel.: 852-2890-2755 and fax: 852-2882-5463 no later than **July 31, 2001**.*

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estate of the deceased JOSEPHINE BARREDO MANZANO was settled extrajudicially by her heirs on the 31st of May 2000 before Notary Public Rydely C. Valmores under Doc. 297; Page 61; Book I; Series of 2000.
(PDI-July 9, 16 & 23, 2001)

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CP # 0917-6181516 / 0919-2123230 / 0919-5924258

WELCOME !!!

BCO GRAND LAUNCHINGS

Contact / visit the following business centers for regular business orientation schedule.

◈ *RISE Excel-Pangasinan*
Mr. Manuel G. Valdez / Ms. Jho Valdez
Nancayasan, Urdaneta City, Pangasinan
Tel. Nos. (075) 568-5116/CP # 0917-4473280

RISE Iloilo (every Saturday 3:00 PM. Bus. Orientation)
Amigo Terrace Hotel, Iloilo City
Tel No. (033) 337-9252
CP # 0917-5141369 / 0919-6528190

July 17, 2001 Time: 3:00 PM

◈ *RISE E-Commerce Marikina*
Ms. Erlinda C. Sernadilla
Rm 302 #51 Bayanbayan Ave., Marikina Heights,
Marikina City Tel. No. (02) 934-7764
CP # 0919-3949151

July 18, 2001 Time: 3:00 PM

◈ *RISE CHIT-PANDACAN*
Ms. Necita D. Salivio
1944 A. Sampaguita St., Pandacan, Manila
Tel. No. (02) 561-6605

July 19, 2001 Time: 3:00 PM

◈ *RISE Commonwealth Group*
Ms. Ofelia J. Ballesta
628 Grapes St., Commonwealth Ave., Quezon City
Tel. Nos.: (02) 932-2490 / 428-0840

July 20, 2001 Time: 3:00 PM

◈ *RISE Global City Taguig*
Ms. Regina C. Velasco
355 B-8 GHQ Zone 1-C Signal, Taguig,
Metro Manila Tel. Nos.: (02) 838-7883
CP # 0919-4339797 / 0919-8990289

July 21, 2001 Time: 3:00 PM

◈ *RISE E-Novaliches*
Ms. Emma C. Daniel
#18 Sta. Rosa St., Villa Magdalena 2, Camarin Rd.,
Novaliches, Caloocan City Tel. # (02) 983-0346
CP # 0919-3082387

July 25, 2001 Time: 3:00 PM

◈ *RISE LAGUNA*
Timmy Gabriel *(contact person)*
Brgy. Tubigan Biñan, Laguna
Tel. No.: (049) 839-1136 CP # 0919-8195899

SOON TO LAUNCH....

◈ *RISE Tagbilaran City, Bohol*
Tel. No.: (038) 235-3853

◈ *RISE Project 8, Quezon City*
Ms. Rosario E. Ranoa
106-B Rd. 20, Project 8, Quezon City
Tel No.: (02) 456-6955/453-8280 / CP # 0917-3502595
Fax: (02) 927-2314 Email: *rrreds@pacific.net.ph*

◈ *RISE DAGUPAN*
Mr.Generoso Bornolla/Ms. Imelda Sarmeinto*(contact persons)*
43 Perez Blvd., Dagupan City Tel. (075) 515-6755
CP # 0917-3654775 / 09196649784

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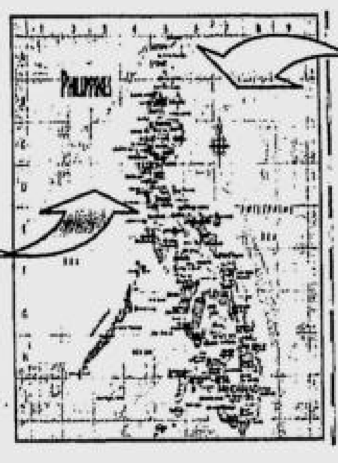

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
BAGUIO GENERAL HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER
Baguio City

INVITATION TO BID

The Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center invites all DOH-Manila accredited suppliers for Drugs and Medicines, Hospital Medical, Dental, Surgical, Laboratory, X-ray reagents and supplies to bid for the same at the Cobalt Building, BGHMC Auditorium, Baguio City.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on July 24, 2001, Tuesday, 2:00 PM at the same venue for any clarifications. Opening of the Bids is scheduled on August 2, 2001, Thursday, at exactly 2:00 PM at the same venue. Late Bidders shall be disqualified.

Instruction to Bidders (BAC FORM A) and Official Bid Tender Form (BAC FORM B) can be availed of at the office of the Chief, Medical Professional Staff c/o Mrs. Ma. Teresa C. Fajardo, after payment in cash of P300.00 at the Cashier's Office at the main hospital building, from July 17 to July 24, 2001, from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

The PBAC shall award the contracts to suppliers with the lowest qualifying bids. The BGHMC reserves the right to waive any minor deviations in the bid tender documents which do not affect the substance and validity of the bids and reserves the right to accept the bid most advantageous to the government.

Request or appeals for consideration will be entertained within seven (7) working days from posting of the winning bidders and may be submitted to the PBAC Secretariat, Mrs. Ma. Teresa C. Fajardo, BGHMC, for PBAC review, and will be decided on within seven (7) working days from receipt. The decision of the PBAC is final.

Inquiries may be made with the PBAC Secretariat, Mrs. Ma. Teresa C. Fajardo at 442-6230.

(Sgd.) **MANUEL V. FACTORA, M.D., MHA**
Medical Center Chief
BGHMC

(PDI--July 14, 15 & 16, 2001)

PRAMA FOUNDATION, INC.

15/F ANTEL 2000 Corporate Centre, 121 Valero St.
Salcedo Village, Makati City 1200
Tel: 751 93 00 to 03; Fax: 845 34 89

Notice of Annual Meeting of Members

Date : **17 July 2001** (Tuesday)
Venue: **Top of the Citi**
34/F Citibank Tower
8741 Paseo de Roxas
Makati City
Time : **3 PM** (Registration Time)

For more information, call Lyn, Marnie, Jane, Rica, George or Charmaine at 751 93 00 to 03

Email: prama@info.com.ph; Web: www.pramafound.com

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- Achieve budgeted revenue and profit targets set nationally for Consulting business
- Grow Consulting business by developing and delivering on business plan
- Establish budgets and targets for areas of responsibility and manage budgets
- Work through a team of consulting managers to recruit, select, train, appraise performance and administer salaries of employees

Interested applicants, please send updated resumé to:

BOX NO. MN-2027
c/o Classified Ads Division
Philippne Daily Inquirer
Chino Roces Avenue cor. Yague & Mascardo Sts.,
Makati City

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED HARVEST RURAL BANK (Daraga, Albay), INC.

1. Starting July 17, 2001, the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) thru its duly authorized representatives shall receive claims for insured deposits maintained with the closed **Harvest Rural Bank (Daraga, Albay), Inc.**
2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of the closed bank from July 17 to 26, 2001, Mondays thru Fridays, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. where PDIC representatives are stationed to accept claims and entertain queries of depositors.

   After July 26, 2001, all depositors can file their claims personally or thru mail at the PDIC located at 2228 Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City, Mondays thru Fridays, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to our representatives when filing their claims:
   a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook and or Certificate of Time Deposit; and
   b. Latest identification document (ID) bearing the depositor's signature

   Other documents may be required by our representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.
4. Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 3591 as amended by R.A. 7400, the prescriptive date (last day) for filing of claims for insured deposits in the closed Harvest Rural Bank (Daraga, Albay), Inc. is on November 7, 2002. After November 7, 2002, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDI--July 16, 2001)

Republic of the Philippines
Mindanao Polytechnic State College
C. M. Recto Avenue, Lapasan, Cagayan de Oro City 9000
Tel. Nos. (08822) 72-60-65/72-79-46, (038) 856-1739
Fax (088) 856-4696

July 27, 2001

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

The Mindanao Polytechnic State College, located at Claro M. Recto, Lapasan, Cagayan de Oro City, invites all interested Contractors to prequalify and to bid for the continuing construction of the four (4) storey Learning Resource Center located in the same address mentioned above.

Requirements:
1. PCAB Registration and Classification "Large A"
2. Bank Commitment of P1,000,000.00
3. Equipment
   - 3.1 Two (2) units Bar Cutter, owned
   - 3.2 One (1) unit Concrete Vibrator, owned
   - 3.3 One (1) unit Concrete Mixer, 1 bagger, owned
   - 3.4 Pumpcrete, rented
   - 3.5 Transit Mixer, rented

Schedule of Activities:
1. Deadline for the submission of Accomplished Pre-C ---------------- **August 15, 2001**
2. Pre-bid Conference -------------------------- **August 17, 2001**
3. Opening of bids ------------------------------ **August 21, 2001**

Bid documents will be issued to prequalified bidders only after payment of a non-refundable amount of P1,500.00.

All particulars relative to prequalifications, bonds, evaluation of bids and awards of contract shall be governed by PD 1594 and its implementing rules and regulations as amended.

The MPSC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect found therein and award the contract to the bidder who offered the most advantageous term to the government.

(Sgd.) **JUANITO J. GEMENTIZA, DTE**
IEP Executive Director
PBAC Chairman

(PDI - July 9, 16 & 23, 2001)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given of the Loss of the following Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company Stock Certificates:

Serial No.	No. of Shares
129684	46
36364	187
116975	98
MFU33774	187
110898	50
98344	15
98343	93
92460	5
MFO92459	93
MFO76763	46
MFO67706	85
MFO57539	77
MFO48469	15
MFO41546	11
MFO41547	2
MFU13463	124
MFO26335	1
MFO26336	11
MFO18777	11
MFO012696	11
MFO9769	11
MFU4441	175
MFO4898	52
MFU3295	350
129685	39

under the name of Harry G. Fullen and/or Rosa R. Fullen. If no one contest after one (1) year new certificates will be issued.

(PDI--July 16, 23 and 30, 2001)

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897-8425 (Telefax)

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912-9008 to 11 (Ali Mall)

MAKATI
892-5578, 811-4361
811-4370

KALAW
528-0213, 527-3342

MEGAMALL
635-0219, 635-0220

Honda eyes transmission plant in RP for Asean mart

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

HONDA Motor Co. Ltd. of Japan is planning to expand its presence in the country with a multimillion-dollar investment project to build transmission parts for its regional market.

An INQUIRER source said the investment plan to make the Philippines Honda's production hub for transmission in Asean was conveyed by a top official of Honda Cars Philippines Inc. to Trade Secretary Manuel "Mar" Roxas II during a meeting last month.

Toyota Motor Co. Ltd. and several Japanese assemblers have earlier threatened to pull the plug on their assembly plants here if the government did not resolve the simmering labor problem besetting the industry. The government has since worked overtime to reach an accord between the assemblers and their unions to maintain normal operations.

The project, which is expected to generate $100 million in annual exports, will be implemented under the Asean Industrial Cooperation (Aico) agreement, a pan-Asean production-sharing scheme.

Under Aico, corporations can trade different components of their products in separate plants in Southeast Asia at preferred duties of 0 to 5 percent ahead of the 2004 implementation of the Asean Free Trade Area.

Aico is meant to improve the competitive position of Asean companies in the global and regional markets by providing the means to apply the principles of economies of scale and scope in the manufacturing process.

Honda already has an existing Aico arrangement between its Philippine, Malaysian and Indonesian subsidiaries for components of its City, Civic and Accord passenger car models.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND BANKING GROUP LIMITED
3rd Flr. Tower One Ayala Triangle, Ayala Avenue, Makati City

STATEMENT OF CONDITION
As of June 22, 2001

ASSETS		Amount
Cash and Cash Items	P	2,912,584.39
Due from Central Bank		1,695,766,851.64
Due from Other Banks		2,170,051,664.01
Investments in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)		949,012,179.25
Loans, Discounts and Advances (Net)		3,839,916,818.76
Equity Investments (Net)		2,579,850.00
Due from Head Office/Branches/Agencies Abroad		3,847,325,218.94
Bank Premises, Furnitures, Fixtures and Equipments (Net)		9,123,338.30
Other Assets (Net): Others		224,836,722.65
TOTAL ASSETS	P	12,741,545,407.94
LIABILITIES		
Demand Deposits	P	270,203,559.26
Savings Deposits		1,156,950,558.08
Time Deposits		4,687,729,588.20
Special/Other Deposits		39,470.38
Due to Central Bank		1,229,401.56
Due to Head Office/Branches/Agencies Abroad		5,927,832,419.08
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders		1,987,672.08
Bills Payable		
Interbank Borrowings		52,355,329.25
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits		677,023.28
Other Liabilities		290,699,333.23
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P	12,369,714,705.00
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		Amount
Assigned Capital	P	250,340,141.00
Other Capital Accounts		121,490,561.94
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	371,830,702.94
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	12,741,545,407.94
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS		
Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	P	1,011,819,372.13
Spot/Future Exchange Bought		3,868,760,145.64
Spot/Future Exchange Sold		3,674,382,210.56
Other Contingent Accounts		1,605,916,927.34
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P	10,150,878,655.67

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION
HEAD OFFICE
As At 30 September 2000
In AUD Millions

Capital	5,402
Surplus	4,405
Profits	3,607
Total Deposits	100,602
Total Resources	172,487

LIST OF SENIOR OFFICERS:

Mr. Michael La Brooy	General Manager
Mr. Ashish Sharma	Deputy General Manager
Mr. Andrew Holdstock	Chief Operating Officer
Mr. Johnny Co	Senior Vice President - Business Banking
Mr. Nonilo Cruz	Senior Vice President - Business Banking
Ms. Regina Fajardo	Vice President - Treasury
Mrs. Bee Lian So	Vice President - International Services

Other Information

1.	Deposits of:	
	a. Government	nil
	b. Banks	464,120.00
	c. Trust Department	nil
2.	Compliance with Magna Carta Law:	
	Prescribed Ratio — 6% Small Ent. — 2% Medium Ent.	
	Actual Compliance — 103% — 173%	
3.	Amount of Non-Performing Loans	173,161,020.35
4.	Ratio of Non-Performing loans to total loan portfolio	4.35%
5.	Amount of classified loans and other risk assets	184,311,000.00
6.	General Provision for Loan Losses	39,961,539.05
7.	Specific Provision for Loan Losses	88,860,215.65
8.	Return on Equity (ROE) - Based on Assigned Capital*	64.00%
	Return on Equity (ROE) - Based on Shareholder's Equity	[illegible]
	Return on Equity (ROE) - Inclusive of Net Due to HO	12.80%
9.	Amount of DOSRI loans/advances	2,270,859.05
10.	Ratio of DOSRI loans/adv to total loans/advances	0.08%
11.	Amount of Past Due DOSRI loans /advances	nil
12.	Ratio of Past Due DOSRI loans/adv to total loan portfolio	nil
13.	"Net Due to Head Office/Branches/Agencies Abroad" forms part of capital of Philippine Branch of foreign bank	2,080,507,200.14

*Amended to conform with Circular No. 208 dated August 17, 1999 and Memorandum to All Banks dated November 29, 1999.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES }
MAKATI CITY } S.S.

WE, ANDREW HOLDSTOCK and ARLINO MAGSAKAY of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

(Sgd.) ANDREW HOLDSTOCK
Chief Operating Officer

(Sgd.) ARLINO MAGSAKAY
Assistant Vice-President
Operations

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 11 July 2001, affiants exhibiting to me their Passport No. 500153360, issued at U.K., on November 16, 1995 and Community Tax Certificate No. 04168505, issued at Makati City, on February 21, 2001.

(Sgd.) BENJAMIN R. MATA
NOTARY PUBLIC
Until Dec. 31, 2001
PTR No. 3123633R DTO
Date Issued January 2, 2001

Doc. No. 102
Book No. 22
Page No. VI
Series of 2001

Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry
announces its
MID YEAR
ECONOMIC BRIEFING FOR CEOs
with
DR. SUPACHAI PANITCHPAKDI
Incoming Director-General
World Trade Organization
as Keynote Speaker
and
HON. MANUEL A. ROXAS II
Secretary, Department of Trade and Industry
HON. LEONARDO Q. MONTEMAYOR
Secretary, Department of Agriculture
HON. DANTE B. CANLAS
Secretary, National Economic & Dev't. Authority
MR. VINAY BHARGAVA
Country Director, World Bank
as Resource Speakers
18 July 2001; Grand Ballroom; 10:45 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati City
with the assistance of:
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TAPS
FEDERATION OF FILIPINO-CHINESE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, INC.(FFCCCII)
WILLIAM, GOTHONG & ABOITIZ, INC. (WG&A)
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FOREIGN, LOCAL LENDERS

BSP probes banks for forex violations

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

MORE than 10 foreign and local banks were found by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas last week to have violated its foreign exchange regulations and, in the process, contributed to the peso's weakness.

"There are violations going on and more than 10 banks are being investigated. If the trend continues, we may have to impose additional or stricter penalties," Bangko Sentral Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said.

Partly due to speculation, the peso has been falling in value against the dollar for almost a month now. Last Friday, the peso shed another nine centavos to 53.17 to $1.

The banks being investigated, Reyes said, have failed to submit the original documents being required by the central bank to support any transaction of individuals or corporations worth $10,000 and above.

Some banks even resorted to splitting the dollar transactions to circumvent the policy, he said.

In June last year, the BSP required banks to detail their foreign exchange transactions and those found violating the order would be slapped a daily fine of P30,000 for every questionable transaction plus a possible suspension or even a revocation of their foreign exchange license.

The order led to the investigation of more than 20 banks and foreign exchange corporations that were subsequently fined and penalized. Reyes said no forex corporation was included in the recent list.

"We may have to impose stricter penalties like suspend their forex license for at least a week because some banks have become chronic violators," Reyes said.

This week, Reyes said the Bangko Sentral would come up with a list of original documents that a bank must submit to support any transaction worth at least $10,000.

The list, the official said, would be coordinated and coursed through the Bankers Association of the Philippines, which has been cooperating with the central bank on how the peso's volatility could be curbed.

"We (BSP and BAP) must agree on the documents that a bank must present for verification of our examiners. We have to standardize the requirements," he noted.

Without documents such as the billing, invoice and shipment receipts, a bank must not entertain foreign exchange transactions for a client. Otherwise, the bank faces stiff penalties, Reyes warned.

For instance, the BSP official said a client buying dollars to pay for hospital bills in the United States must present the hospital bill or any original certification to support the foreign exchange requirement.

The banks being investigated, he said, have been submitting only photocopies of the required documents. In some instances, Reyes said that they discovered that dollars were sold to different names bearing the same address.

Reyes pointed out that any individual or company was limited to buying not more than $10,000 every 15 days if the currency transaction was not supported by an invoice or a shipment. An importer with a legitimate maturing obligation such as an oil company could buy more than the limit.

Gov't, Tan near deal on PNB rehab

BY ELENA R. TORRIJOS

THE GOVERNMENT is close to wrapping up negotiations to take control of Philippine National Bank, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said in an interview.

Camacho, however, declined to give details about the negotiations or to predict when a resolution for the bank's rehabilitation could be reached. Tobacco magnate Lucio Tan currently controls PNB, the country's fifth largest bank.

Following a speech before seven associations involved in the country's capital markets yesterday, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo herself said the government was "not really very far" from completing ongoing talks for PNB's rehabilitation.

Earlier, Norberto Nazareno, president of state-owned Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp., said the government wanted to convert its loans to a maximum 50-percent equity stake in the bank.

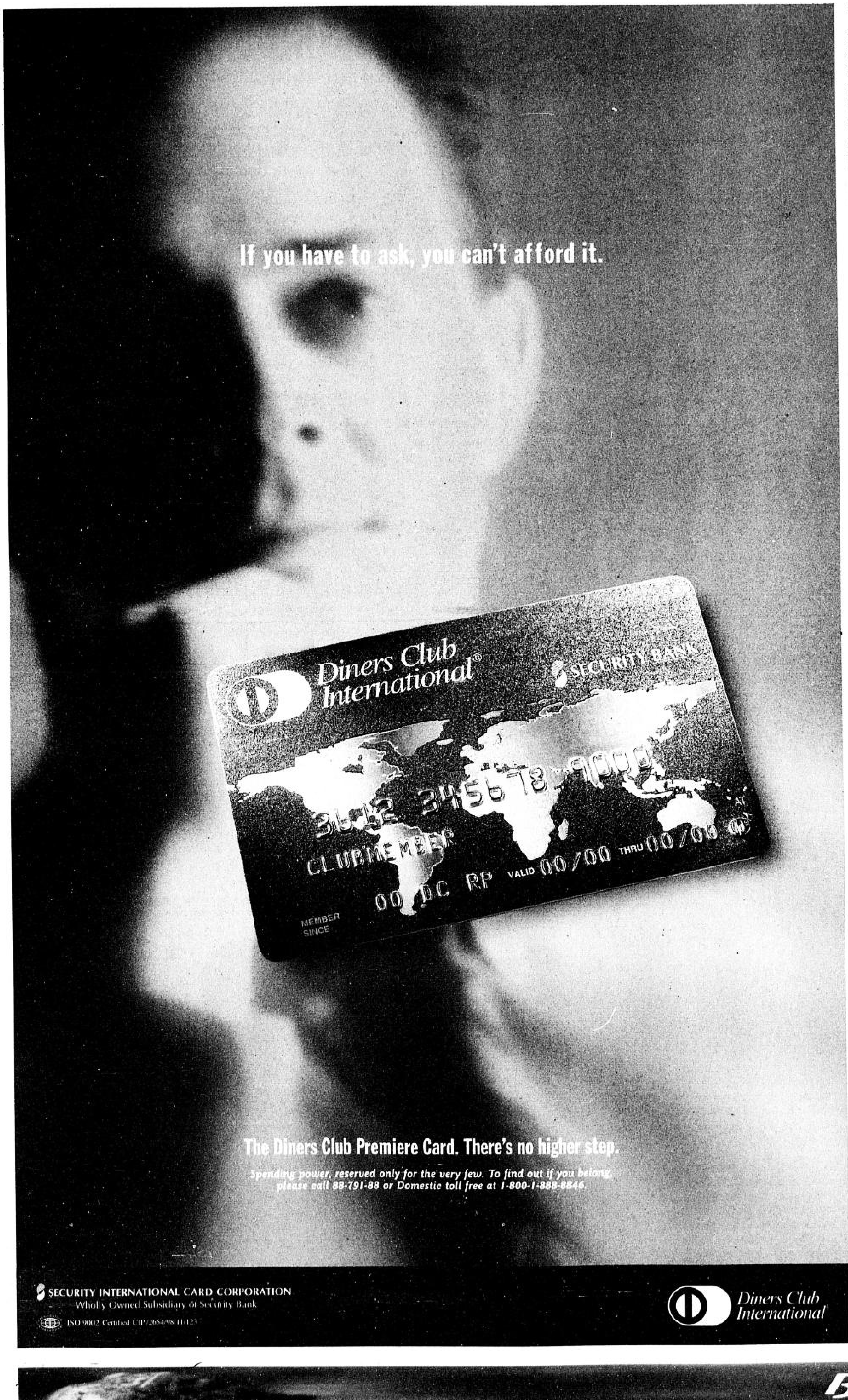
Last May, PNB president Feliciano Miranda said that Tan had agreed in principle to the government's debt-to-equity conversion plan, which was reportedly designed to improve the financial condition of PNB and later on attract buyers for the government's stake in the bank.

Nazareno was elected last May as one of two government nominees to the PNB board, replacing former Supreme Court Justice Andres Narvasa as chair of the bank.

At that time, Nazareno said the major issue that remained to be threshed out with Tan was the conversion price or valuation of PNB.

An audit of PNB conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers revealed that PNB had bigger financial problems than what auditing giant SGV & Co. had earlier determined.

The draft audit report noted that half of the bank's loans were non-performing and the bank's book value had deteriorated to P40 a share.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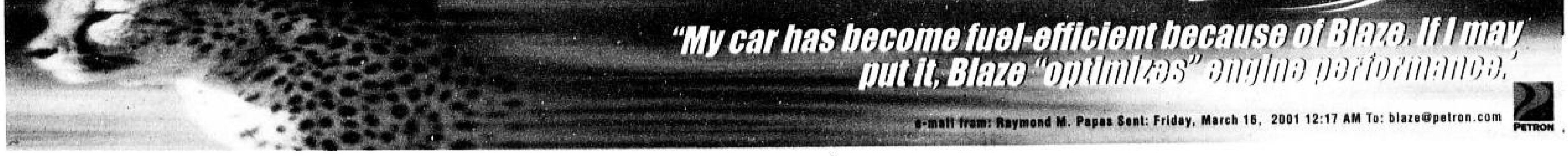
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PETRON

BUSINESS Monday
MARGIE QUIMPO-ESPINO, Business Features Editor

After 98 years, Citibank puts a woman at the top

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

Photos by Raymund Isaac

IT TOOK Citibank N.A. 98 years before it put a woman in charge of the consumer and retail banking operations in the Philippines.

Perhaps the bank was just waiting for a Nina D. Aguas to come along.

The forty-something Aguas was appointed country business manager for Global Consumer Banking in the Philippines in March last year, after a long stint with Citibank offices abroad.

Her counterpart, Catherine Weir, heads the Corporate Banking Group. Significantly, it is also the first time that a woman heads the bank's corporate group in the Philippines.

At one time, she was the corporate audit country director—responsible for 15 countries—and was also the first woman to hold the position.

She came back as the first female country business manager in the Philippines, and also the first in the Asia-Pacific region. Aguas chose this position over a similar offer to head operations in Latin America because she felt it was time she, too, lend a hand in nation-building.

Just as importantly, Aguas looked forward to spending more time with her family, this after 19 years of traveling.

It was an uphill climb to be a female CEO, she tells the INQUIRER, as Citibank then had shades of being a fraternity. So when a woman, a wife and a mother of five growing children was being considered for the high post, it could not be helped that concerns were raised, not to mention eyebrows going up.

She has, however, proven herself to be an achiever from her school days at the University of Sto. Tomas, where she majored in Accounting, to her early days as staff auditor at SGV & Co. It was in SGV that she met her husband, Mario Aguas, now a partner at the accounting firm.

Aguas joined Citibank 19 years ago where she has been assigned to different countries, handling various assignments for close to two decades.

AGUAS and her senior management team.

She recalls one interview with the Citibank officials in New York who were sizing her up for a major promotion. It was at that time, she says, that she firmly put the message across that she is up to any responsibility in the bank.

"We ourselves are always in the best position to know when we are ready to move on to bigger things. I walked into that office with that conviction—I wanted the job and I'm going for it. I heard the glass ceiling crack that day," Aguas reminisces.

Now that she is back in the Philippines, she wants her staff to follow her example and break through barriers—real and perceived—and make a name for themselves in the corporate world.

"My stints abroad have given me a better appreciation of the Filipino talent. We are hardworking, creative and genuinely oriented toward customer service. Watching my people, I still marvel at how natural it is for us to go the extra mile for a client—no effort at all. I guess because we, as Filipinos, place so much value on hospitality."

"I am confident we can hold our own in the global workplace. Because my overseas assignments opened up a whole world of valuable experience for me, I want to share that with my people. Even now I have already sent many of our managers abroad. The Philippines is now being recognized as a good source of talent for Citibank offices abroad," she says.

Aguas manages a workforce of about 1,000 full-time employees and 2,200 external partners who deal with Citibank's credit card business.

She tries to deal with all layers of the organization, from the partners to the top management group through lunch meetings and forums centered on employee interaction.

"I like to keep my ears on the ground. It's never healthy for a CEO to only be talking to her executives. Whenever my schedule permits, I have lunch with our sales agents who have the pulse of the market.

"For the employees, I have a year-long calendar of activities under a Human Resources program called Voice of the Employee. One of our initiatives is host a series of roundtable discussions, where over lunch, I get the chance to know the staff on a more personal level," she narrates.

Recalling her stints abroad, Aguas compares the working environment in the Philippines. "Here, you really need to connect with the people. There has to be genuine team play and concern. But I tell you, once you earn their trust, the rewards are great for they will go the extra mile for the business."

Aguas has an open-door policy by which she welcomes anyone who needs to check with her or ask for her help on something. "I never want to use the excuse that I'm too busy to see someone—I try to make the time because I know it's not easy to find the nerve to see your boss, and it can be very deflating to be turned down."

She also encourages her people to speak up during meetings and to learn the art of holding the audience's attention. "Filipinos are naturally shy but we have to overcome this if we want to make it in the global arena. I can still remember how it feels to be a junior officer attending meetings with the seniors, and being unsure of whether you can say something. I tell my people they can and more importantly, I give them the assurance that I will listen."

"WE ourselves are always in the best position to know when we are ready to move on to bigger things."

NINA Aguas chooses her current post over a similar offer to head operations in Latin America because she feels it is time she lends a hand in nation-building.

As a result of her direct dealings with the different layers of the organization, employee satisfaction at the Global Consumer Bank operations of Citibank N.A. increased by 10 percent, the second highest in the region. This is another feather in Aguas' cap because Citibank as an organization places a premium on employee welfare. "We believe a happy employee makes a happy customer and ultimately, a better company," Aguas relates.

Employee satisfaction is one of the ways she measures herself as a manager. She also looks into customer satisfaction, community involvement, financial performance and risk management.

Because of her vision, better teamwork and a strong work ethic across the organization, Citibank surpassed the financial targets last year.

"I have deep respect for the people I work with. I'm blessed to have a dynamic and committed senior management team that delivers excellent work and can rise to any challenge. They are the best in the business and I'm glad to have them on my side," Aguas concludes.

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MAPPING THE FUTURE

Gabino A. Mendoza

THERE ARE so many exciting new things going on in management today that we sometimes get swept away trying to explore all of them, all at the same time. We become engrossed in asking questions like:

- "How do we design our marketing efforts so that we end up not only satisfying our customers but also actually delighting them?" or,
- "How do we educate and train our work force so that they become empowered to work flexibly and creatively?" or even,
- "How do we develop our company so that through TQM (total quality management) and other such management technologies we can be competitive on a global basis?"

Too often, when we discuss management, when we write about business, we concentrate so much on trying to "push out the edge of the envelope."

We expend so much effort on trying to explore, to explain what is new, current and exciting, that we tend to forget that most of our companies do not live on the frontiers of management.

Many companies compete in what are essentially protected local, or at most, national markets. They are shielded, coddled and pampered by benign government policy, by the imperfection of real-life markets and by the sheer inertia of things.

Look around you. I am sure you can point to a good number of indifferently managed businesses that have thrived comfortably over the years. They have done nothing particularly outstanding nor innovative.

They may even have just bumbled along, occasionally making horrific but never quite fatal mistakes. And they have survived and prospered.

The managers of these companies are the hardest to reach. You say to them, "You really should do something about your products. In the neighboring countries, people in the same business are turning out higher quality products at much lower costs."

"C'mon," they reply, "you know very well that we don't have to compete with them. We're protected. It will cost them an arm and a leg to invade our market. A few have tried and failed. They may have better economics but we have stronger politics going for us."

You try to explain to them that if they adopt some of the more modern techniques of management—run a more orderly and disciplined plant, improve their production processes, minimize the waste of rework on defectives, etc.—they will be better prepared to face the uncertain future.

They will raise the productivity of their workers and perhaps be able to afford to pay them better wages.

They retort, "What do we want to do that for? Right now our workers are happy enough having jobs. What we pay them enables them to live. It's not an easy life but then, that's what they're used to. They're doing better than their neighbors who are either unemployed or under-employed. If we pay them more, they'll just have to support more relatives from the provinces who will come to share their newly won prosperity. Then, they'll want more. Leave well enough alone. We haven't had any labor unrest in decades.

"Besides, doing what you want us to do will take a lot of work. It may even require investing in additional equipment and tools. To do that, we'll have to borrow money from the bank. We'll have to worry about paying it back. You talk about kaizen, continuous improvement. To us, that sounds like never-ending investments in ever better and ever more expensive equipment and tools and jigs and whatnots.

"Before you know it, we're on a treadmill, trying to keep up, catch up with the payments to the bank and the rising expectations of our workers. When will we then find time for our three-mornings-a-week golf games with our friends in Congress and in the Bureau of Customs? What will happen to our annual trips to the States or to Europe? Will we have to give those up, too? The Japanese love to work themselves to death. We don't. Face it, there's more to life than this business. For us, it's just a means to make the good life affordable."

How do you argue with that? Do you quote Peter Drucker to them on the inevitability of a more open and competitive world? Do you tell them of Alvin Toffler's power shifts or John Naisbitt's megatrends? They'll just laugh at you.

"We've been reading those gurus like you have for the last thirty years. There have been changes," they'll admit, "but they've always been 'somewhere out there.'"

"They've never really affected us. We've gone through Yom Kippur wars, Gulf wars, oil shocks, global recessions, inflations and devaluations, martial law declarations, Edsa revolutions and military coups, killer earthquakes and monster typhoons, and Mount Pinatubo's rampaging floods of lahar, and we're still here, still making profits."

What can you say to these guys? You know they're wrong. You know that, as sure as the sun will rise tomorrow, changes will come.

New technology will drastically alter products, processes and markets. Countries will open up their economies to one another. Business backwaters will be swept, unknowing and unwilling, into the mainstream of global competition.

And when they do, when these ineluctable, unavoidable changes come, then only will they start, smart, hurt, howl at the pain of their self-inflicted fate. All we can do then will be to commiserate with them in their belated regrets and comfort them in their affliction.

(This article reflects the personal views of the author who is a member of the Management Association of the Philippines and professor at the Asian Institute of Management. The MAP Secretariat and the author may be reached via mapsec@globe.com.ph.)

Pangilinan reelected FBDC chair

MOVEMENTS

FORT Bonifacio Development Corp., developer of the Bonifacio Global City, bares recent appointments to its board of directors for the year 2001-2002, following its annual stockholders' meeting held at the FBDC headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig.

FBDC is a joint venture company between the Bonifacio Land Corp. and the Bases Conversion Development Authority.

Manuel V. Pangilinan, Rogelio L. Singson and Ricardo S. Pascua were reelected as chair and vice chair, respectively.

Also named to the board were BLC representatives Napoleon L. Nazareno, Fernando R. Balatbat, Albert F. del Rosario, Michael J.A. Healy, Gerardo O. Lanuza Jr., and Sulficio O. Tagud Jr.

BCDA nominees Asteya M. Santiago, Gerardo R. Seno, Rafael J. Azanza, Alvin P. Capino, Liberto P. Laus and Ari-Ben C. Sebastian were also elected.

Named as members of the advisory board were Carlos S. Rufino, Alfred A. Xerez Burgos Jr. and Michael P. Goco of BLC and Isaac S. Puno III and Jesulito A. Manalo of BCDA.

Deutsche Bank's country officer

DEUTSCHE Bank has appointed Michael Hellbeck as chief country officer of the Philippines effective July 1. He will also assume the role of head of relationship management, global corporate finance.

In his capacity as chief country officer, Hellbeck will report directly to Martin Loat and Robert Stein, chief executive officers of Deutsche Bank's Corporate and Investment Banking, and Private Clients and Asset Management divisions of Deutsche Bank, respectively.

As Head of Relationship Management, he will report to Alan Goodyear, regional head of Relationship Management.

"We are delighted with Michael taking up his new post. He has been with Deutsche Bank for 18 years and has made significant contributions during this period. We are looking forward to his continued input as the bank's businesses progress," said Loat.

Hellbeck replaces Jose Isidro Camacho. Camacho left in March 2001 to become the Secretary of the Department of Energy. In May, Camacho was appointed Secretary of Finance.

Hellbeck was previously head of the bank's Global Banking Division in Korea. He also held the role of acting chief country officer for Korea prior to the appointment of Julian Kim as chief country officer.

With assets of more than 1 trillion Euro and 98,000 employees in the Asia Pacific, Deutsche Bank employs more than 7,200 staff with offices in 15 countries. Through its branch in Manila, Deutsche Bank offers its clients a range of corporate, investment and private banking products and services.

PSi Technologies' new chair

PSI Technologies Holdings Inc., a leading independent provider of power semiconductors assembly and test services, announced that Arthur J. Young Jr., current president and chief executive officer, was also elected chair of the board of directors.

Treasurer and chief financial officer Thelma G. Oribello and corporate secretary Helen G. Tiu were also reappointed to their posts.

Young founded PSi Technologies in 1989 and has been its managing director ever since. He became president and chief executive in 1999. Young is a graduate of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, and is a 13-year veteran of the semiconductor industry.

Unisys has new sales director

IT industry veteran Monchito Ibrahim has joined the dynamic team of e-business solutions company, Unisys Philippines, as the sales director for Financial Services. He directly reports to Gabriel Leiva, president and general manager of Unisys Philippines.

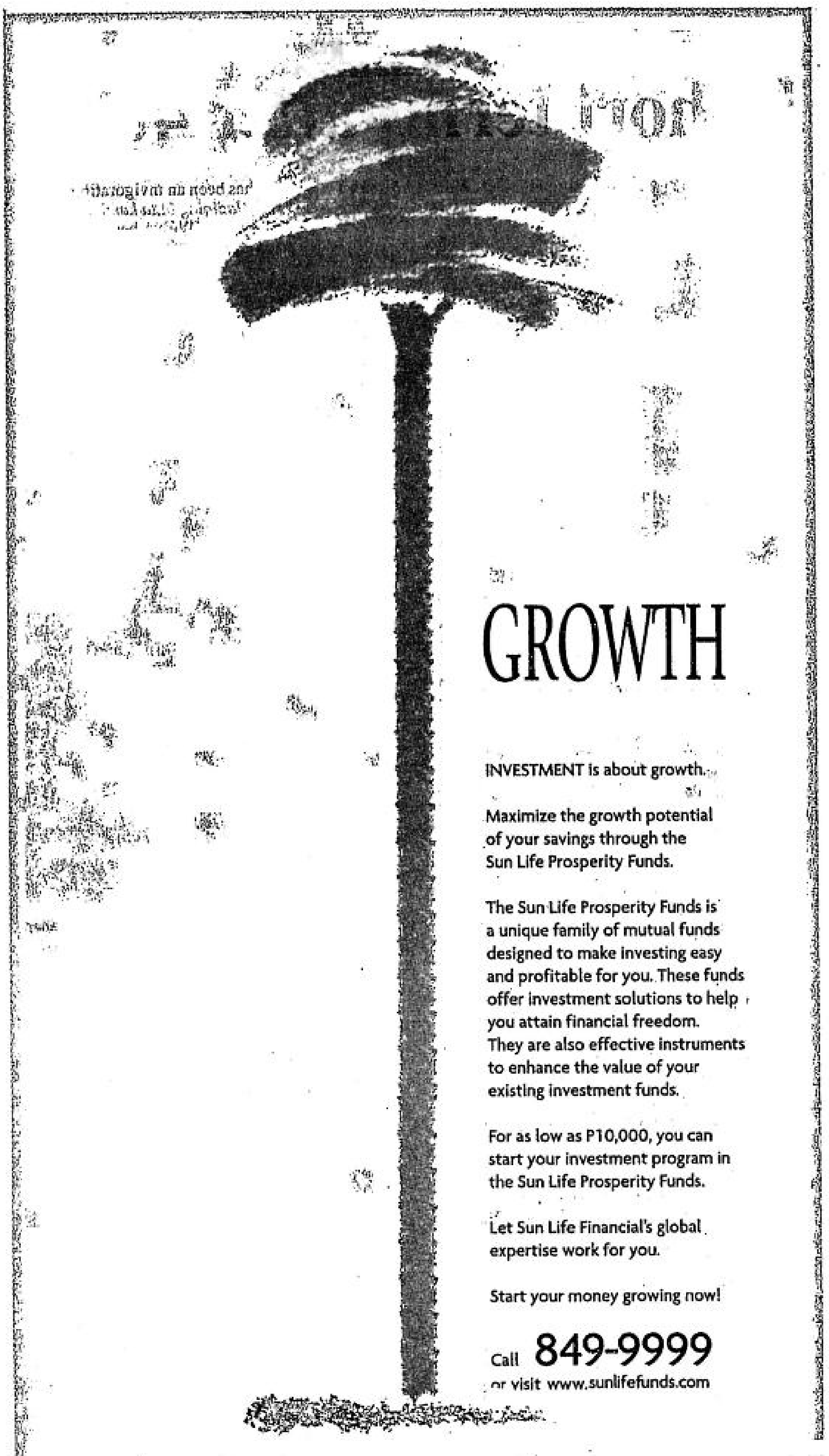
In his new post, Ibrahim is responsible for growing the IT solutions business and servicing the expanding client base of Unisys Philippines in the financial services industry. As sales director, he manages assigned strategic accounts on a national basis and provides professional leadership and coordination to the sales and support teams on focused key accounts.

In his capacity, he is also expected to maintain high level executive contact, focusing on the establishment and maintenance of a strategic relationship with financial institutions.

Ibrahim's 26 years of experience in the Information Technology business of the financial sector covers the areas of business development and consulting to product and project management. He also brings to Unisys over 14 years of experience in managing sales and marketing teams, business units and project teams here and abroad.

Prior to joining Unisys, Ibrahim held the positions of director for Commercial Systems Sector and division manager of the Financial Services Systems Division of Fujitsu Philippines Inc.

He also spent five years as president and general manager of Rich-Spearhead Corp., a consulting and marketing services company, and Rheingold Strategies Corp., formerly the exclusive marketing arm of Siemens Nixdorf Information Systems Philippines.



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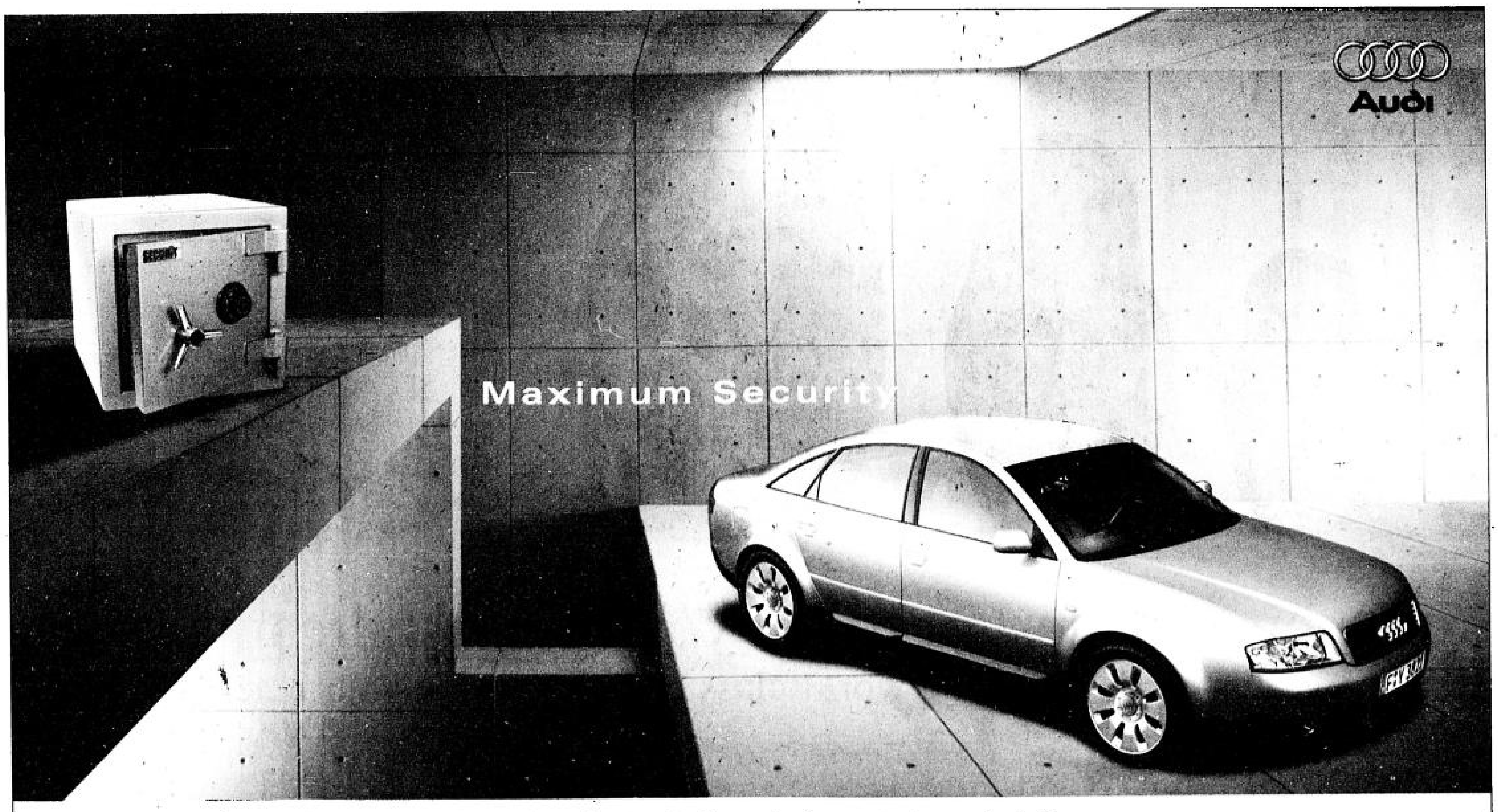

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Who says you can't get a job (albeit short term) after 40?

BY MARGE C. ENRIQUEZ

LIFE may begin at 40 but as far as employment is concerned, you're going the way of the dinosaur.

But age is no reason for discrimination in the job market. Seeing the potential of people over 40, Benito Chan, chair, CEO and creative director of Suyen Corporation, established a community service for this group.

The Prime Team was founded in November 1999 to give short-term jobs to people in this age group.

Lucila Rabaya, Suyen Corporation's human resource and development manager, explains it's called such because 40 is the start of one's peak years.

Eventually, the Prime Team included the disabled. It turns out that the Prime Team members are one of the most enthusiastic salespeople in the Bench/Herbench stores in the big malls.

Rabaya says there are about 30 members in the Prime Team, mostly hired on contractual terms. Tomas Lucban, 42, and Welsh Lozano, 23, from the Deaf Crew, have become full-time employees.

Rabaya says the company has hired handicapped, polio victims, deaf-mutes and people with harelip. Whether they're mid-lifers or disabled, they are evaluated just like every body else in terms of performance, attendance and behavior.

They are not treated differently from the rest of the sales crew. Their contract lasts for five months. The HRD manager observes that most of the job applicants for the Prime Team are mostly women.

Breaking barriers

Lozano was born deaf. But he never considered his condition as an obstacle to his goals. After finishing his studies at the College Assurance Plan School for the Deaf, he applied as a salesperson for Bench/Herbench in SM Megamall. He was hired immediately.

When customers ask him questions, he can read their lips and assist their needs. With foreigners, he explains to them in writing or through gestures that he's deaf. Some of the customers can talk to him in sign language. He's also an asset in the sense that other deaf-mute customers can approach him for help.

PHOTOS BY ROMY HOMILLADA

WELSH Lozano, born deaf-mute, is an asset to the Bench/Herbench store.

"I get excited about what they want to buy and I show what would interest them," says Lozano through an interpreter.

Rabaya cites the case of woman with a harelip whose self-esteem was raised through sales. When her contract expired, she was bold enough to declare that she'd look for work in Makati.

"She was no longer conscious of her disability. They were all treated equally," says Rabaya.

A polio victim, who went as far as high school, gained confidence to further his studies after being part of the Prime Team. Rabaya says the disabled learn to overcome their inhibitions or insecurities because of their exposure to people.

Seniority

It makes no difference to them that baby boomers sell clothing and lifestyle to the Gen X and Y. In most stores, sales staffers are between 18 and 25. The Prime Team members are looked upon with respect.

Lucban, who's worked in a Japanese restaurant and a KTV bar, claims Bench/Herbench has been his best job ever. He says it's the first company he's worked with that values employees of a certain age.

He says working with younger staffers has been an invigorating experience. "*Nagiging bata kami. Hindi na isip matanda.* (We've become young again. We don't think old.)."

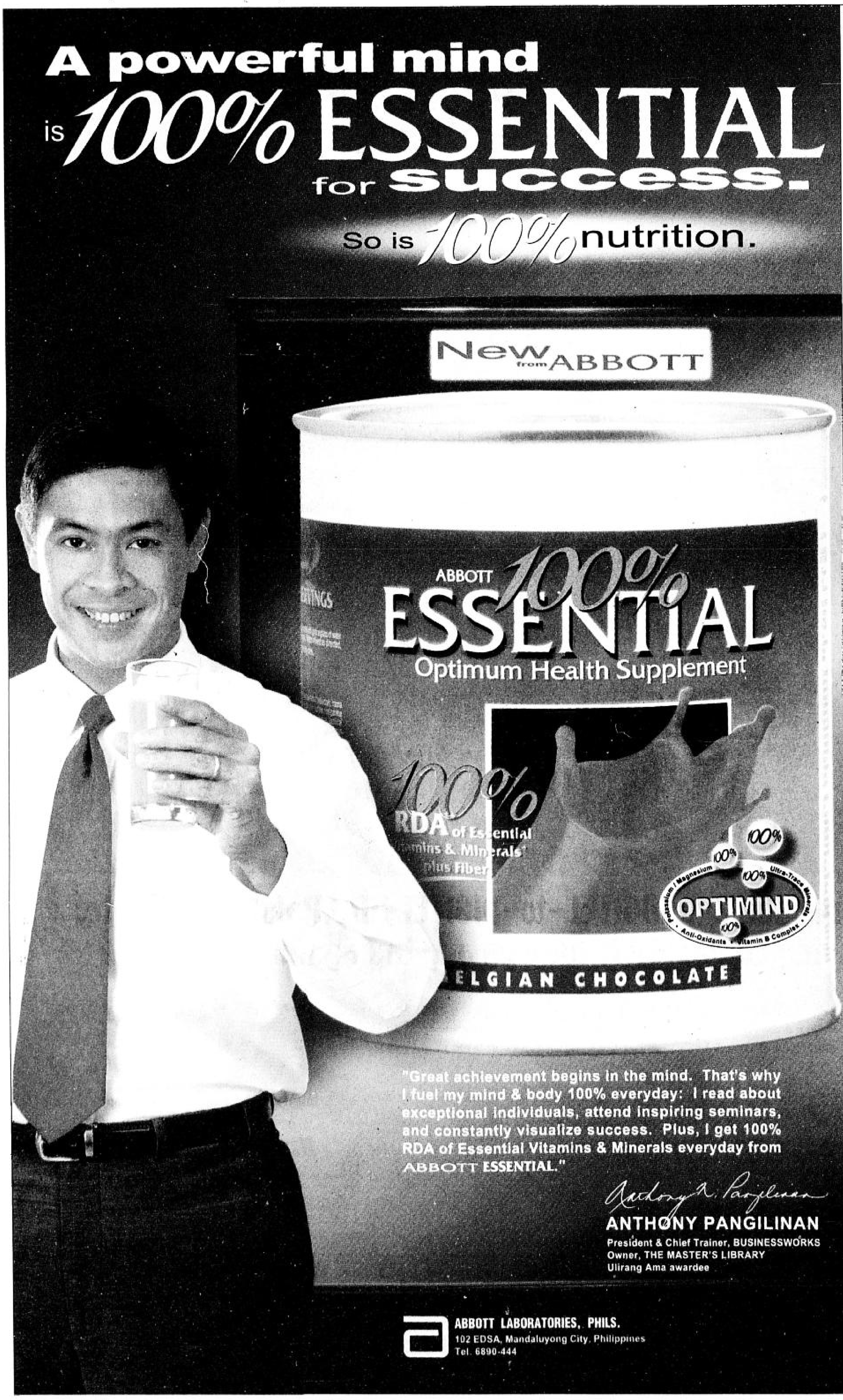
Seeing such celebrities in the Glorietta store such as Kris Aquino and the Marcos scions has awed Lucban.

Zenaida Lising, 45, was a domestic helper in Doha Qatar and in Hong Kong and an insurance sales counselor. One day she accompanied her niece to Suyen Corporation to apply for a job. The security guard told her the company was hiring senior members.

By twist of fate, Lising got the job instead of her niece.

A mature person has fewer inhibitions than his or her younger colleagues. Lising makes sure that any customer who enters the Harrison Plaza branch doesn't leave the store empty-handed.

Dolores Oledan, 43, was jobless when the company she worked for closed down. She was 35 and couldn't find work because employers found her too old. She finally found a temporary job at Bench/Herbench.



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CONSULTING FIRMS' FINDINGS

RP on the slump but execs' pay on the rise

EXECUTIVE salaries in the Philippines and the rest of Asia are going up quite rapidly.

Glendon Rowell, president of Boyden Global Executive Search (Manila), made this observation before members of the Rotary Club of Makati-Guadalupe.

Rowell, who has recruited hundreds of executives for companies in the Philippines, reveals that "back in the early '90s, a P2-million salary was huge."

"Not anymore," he declares.

Sue Nicholls, Boyden chief operating officer and executive vice president, confirms that a successful Filipino candidate for one of Boyden's clients recently signed up for a P5.5-million salary.

This figure is easily a 275-percent hike from the top-tier executive pay level in 1997.

Rowell's observation is backed by international survey findings.

Various consulting firms note that the salaries of executives in the rest of the Asia Pacific region have been steadily rising for the past 10 years.

A study conducted by Mercer Cullen Egan Dell Ltd. reveals that private sector executive salaries in Australia have more than doubled between 1988 and 1998.

During this period, average base yearly salaries of CEOs went up from A$112,000 to A$237,000 (or P3 million to P6 million at present exchange rates).

Mercer Cullen is a consulting firm dealing with salary structures, among others.

Other studies in the last decade showed that double-digit raises from year-ago salaries are common across industries and countries in Asia.

A comprehensive survey by global management consulting firm Hewitt Associates reveals that companies in India gave the highest average base salary increases of 12.4 to 15.1 percent last year, while companies in Indonesia raised salaries as much as 14.8 percent on the average.

The same study notes, however, that salary increases were smallest among developed economies like Hong Kong and Japan, where single-digit increases were the norm.

The survey covered 11 countries in Asia.

Talent, not inflation

Just like other industries, the law of supply and demand governs the executive talent market. More than inflation, demand for executive talent has been driving salaries up.

Data on salary and merit increases gathered by the Hewitt study confirm that companies in Asia recognize the role of right compensation in attracting and retaining the best talent in the market.

According to Rowell, getting the right person the first time is important, since failure to do so can mean significant losses to the company.

"Top companies want the right people at the right time. And that's what we do for these organizations," Rowell stresses.

The Filipino advantage

He also reveals that multinational corporations, which normally lead industry trends, compensation included, look for people whose minds are capable of multicultural thinking.

They need someone who can easily work amid varying cultural values and languages, just like Filipinos.

"A more mixed place in terms of interests, nationalities, cultural strains and ethnic vibrations than the Philippines is hard to find," he adds.

The presence of almost every nationality and many multinational corporations in the country makes most Filipinos familiar with global trends and ways of thinking.

This is one of the factors that account for the demand for Filipino executives.

Almost 100 percent of the executives Boyden Manila recruited for multinationals last year were Filipinos.

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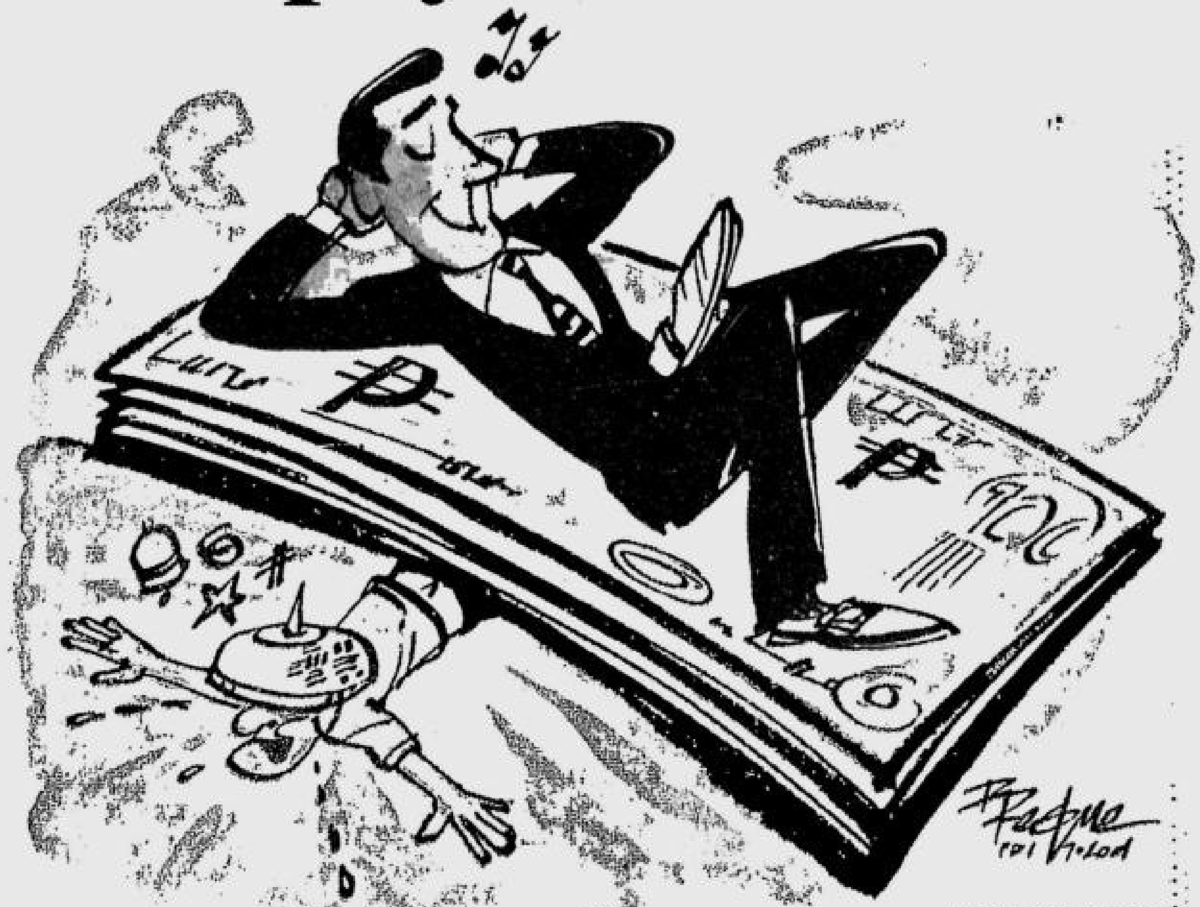

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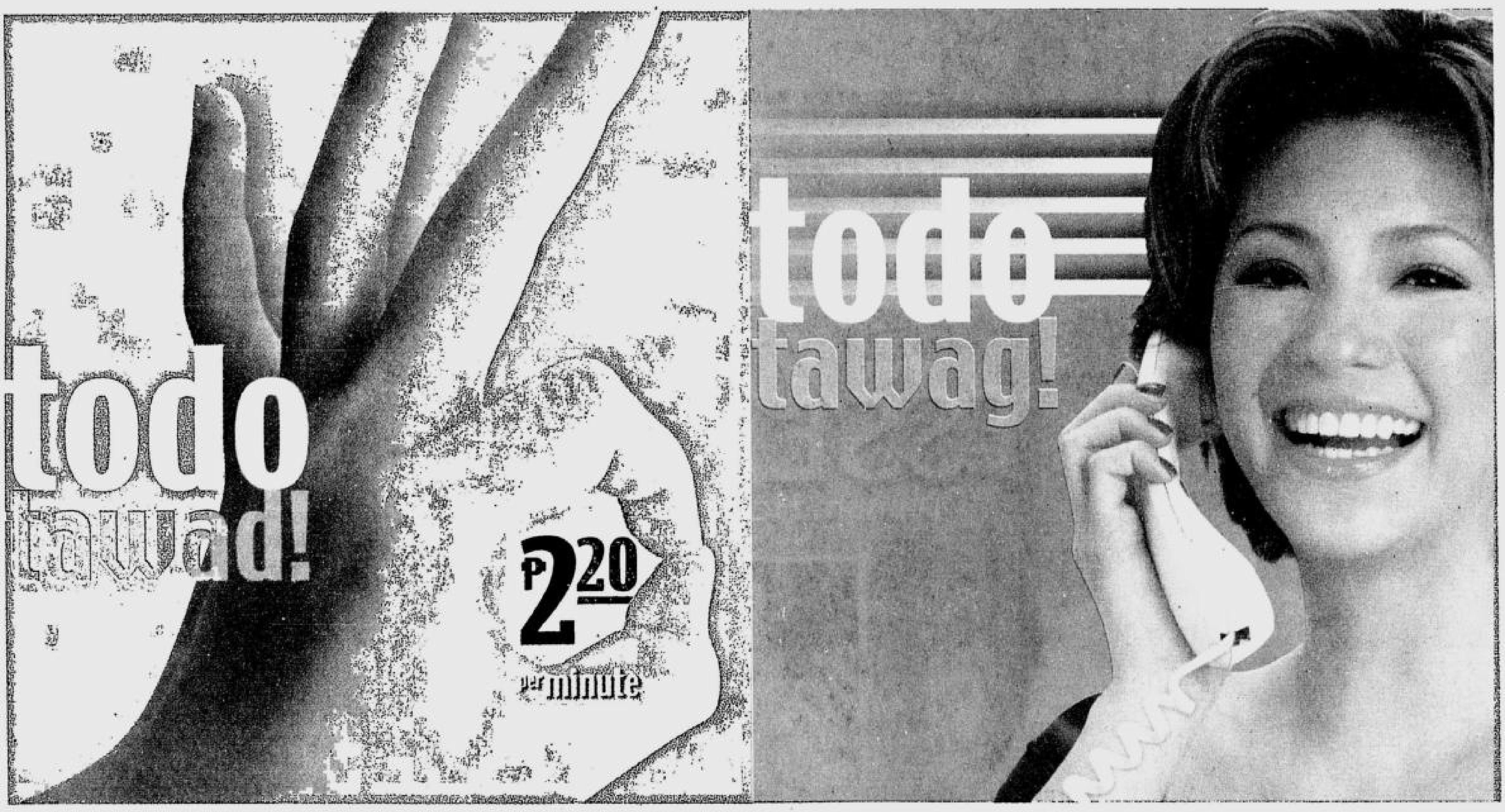

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LIFESTYLE

CHELO BANAL-FORMOSO, Editor ■ LITO B. ZULUETA, Subsection Editor

Night of lively talk on press freedom

HONOREE Jane Kirtley, Philip Ives and Dr. Mike Anderson

DIPLOMATIC SWIRL

Amiga

THE EVENING started sedately enough at Dr. Michael Anderson's condominium on Ayala Avenue where he hosted a reception for Jane Kirtley, professor of media ethics and law and director of the Silha Center at the University of Minnesota. Kirtley has been deeply involved in matters pertaining to freedom of the press and you know how Filipino journalists zealously guard their freedom.

Aside from giving one a complex due to her many achievements, I mean, lawyer Kirtley is a member of the New York, D.C. and Virginia bars, speaks and writes articles on weighty subjects like "The Press and the Law" and has a master's degree as well in journalism. Right now, she serves on many advisory boards and committees and has received numerous awards. I wouldn't even dare broach a subject like "What do you think of divorce?" because it's too stupid for words. Can you imagine someone actually describing divorce as "un-Filipino"? Does this mean concubinage is a national tradition and very Filipino?

Of course, lawyer **Katrina Legarda** was there and no one need ask where she stands on the subject. Need I say yours truly is right beside her? **Mike Anderson** was happily drinking margaritas and getting ready to go on leave while **Philip Ives**, cultural affairs officer at the US embassy, has finished his tour of duty and is leaving. By the way, Dr. **Frank Jenista** is here for a month pinch-hitting for Mike A. So friends who knew him before can give him a call.

* * *

From there we proceeded to a *despedida* at Israeli Ambassador **Irit Ben Abba**'s very elegant residence at Rockwell where an enormous **Bencab** mural decorates the lobby. The farewell reception for **Hagit Ben-Yaakov** (which means "son of Jacob"; I am guessing it also means "from the tribe of") had a lovely curry buffet that **Virgie Moreno** enjoyed. I forgot to ask Virgie what the

NIGHT/ p.D4

KATRINA Legarda and Heidi Bronke

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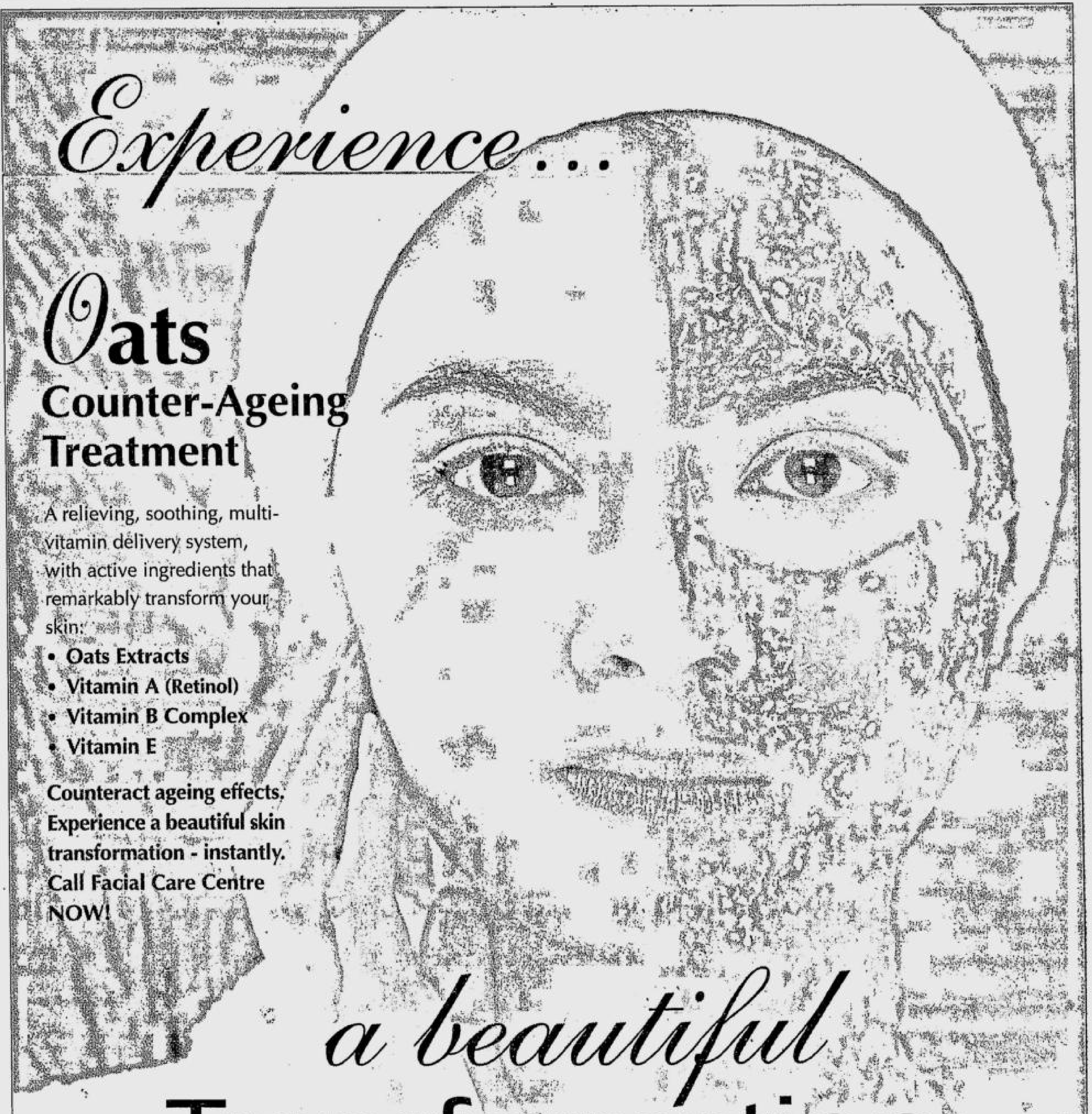

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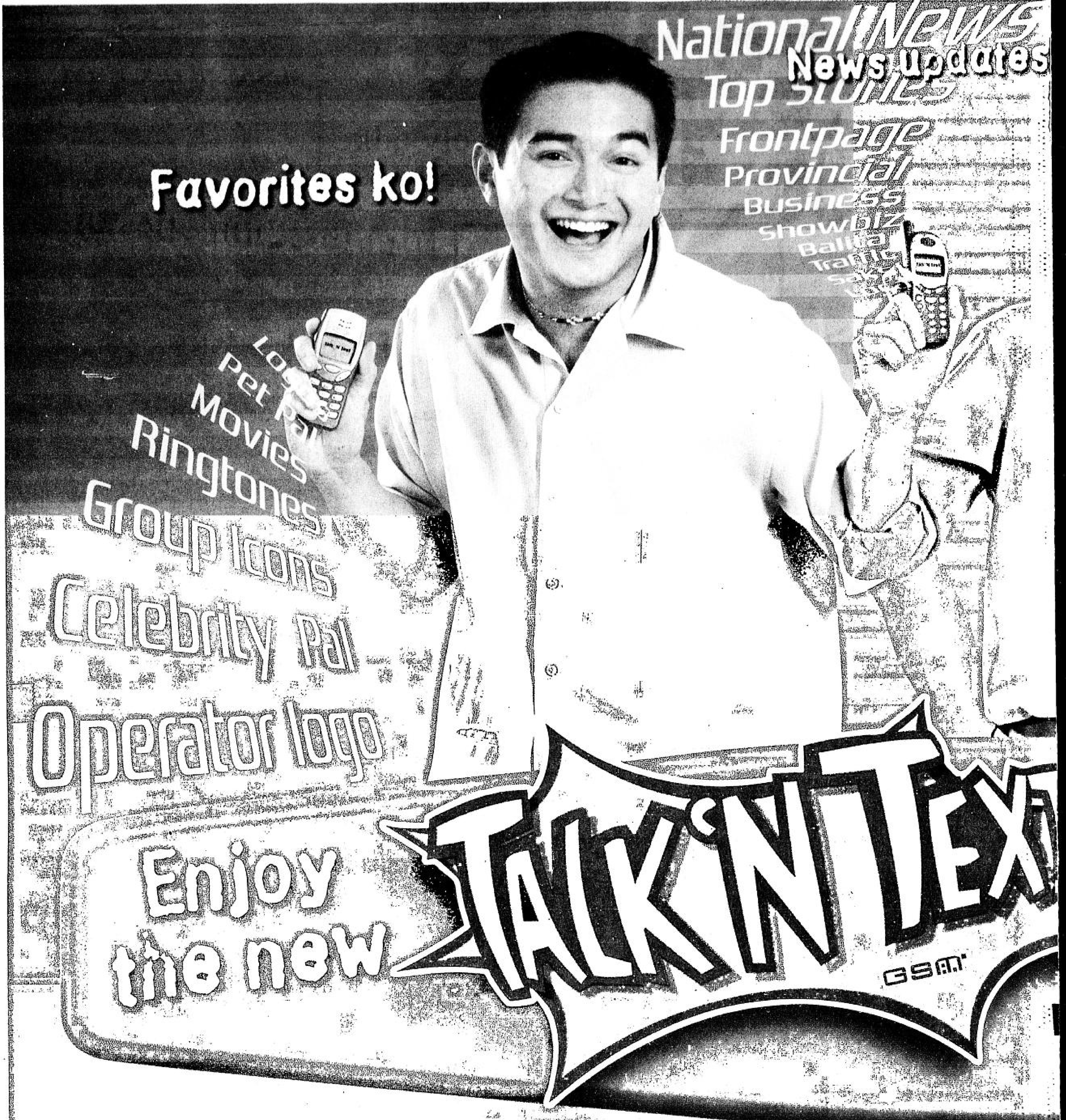
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Night of lively talk on press freedom

(From page D1)

newest plot was. In the meantime, **Teddy Poplinger**, head of security, is also leaving as well as consul **Drora Daya.** The reception also served as a *bienvenida* for **Roi Dvir** who replaces Hagit as secretary at the embassy.

* * *

You've got to hand it to **Ben Farrales** for his true devotion to the Sto. Niño. When he first mentioned that he was having a book launch at the Metropolitan Museum, I naturally thought it would deal with fashion. No way. The book written by **Abe Florendo** is a tribute to the Christ Child in all his different manifestations.

There was an exhibit as well of images lent by the different devotees and naturally, all of Mang Ben's loyal friends like **Mita Rufino**, Venezuelan Ambassador **Milena Ramirez, Ado Escudero, Nolie Hans**, czar **Pitoy, Eki Cardenas, Meldy Cojuangco, Melly** and **Louie Ablaza** (all ready for Louie's Bali birthday the following day) and lots of other well-wishers were there in force, enjoying the *lechon*, deep-fried spinach leaves and lots of fattening stuff.

Talk of the evening was the long hand of the Palace interfering with the elections at NCCA on behalf of **Letty Shahani**. Oh, my, did I hear someone say this was going to be different from **Joseph**'s regime? Remember the CCP?

* * *

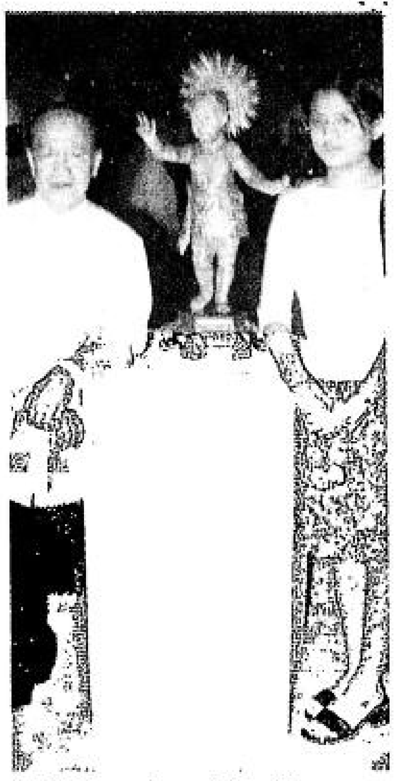
If you have the time there's a great treat at the Metropolitan Museum courtesy of the Peruvian embassy and Ambassador **Julio Cardenas Velarde**. It's an exhibition of Pre-Incan artifacts dating from 1600 years B.C. to 1000 A.D. consisting (think dating from the first millennium!) of bottles in the shape of a drummer, a prisoner, a woman and child and so on. Before the arrival of Columbus, there were already great Indian civilizations after all, as the exhibit shows.

The show opened last week with Ambassador Cardenas, Spanish Ambassador **Tomas Pantoja**, Chilean Ambassador **Carmen Lynam Narvaez** and NCCA chair Dr. **Jaime Laya** doing the honors.

TEDDY Poplinger, Roi Dvir, Hagit Ben-Yaakov, Irit Ben Abba and Drora Daya

PERUVIAN Ambassador Julio Cardenas Velarde, Spanish Ambassador Tomas Pantoja, Chilean Ambassador Carmen Lynam Narvaez and NCCA chair Jaime Laya

PHOTO: ROMY HOMILLADA



ABE Florendo and daughter

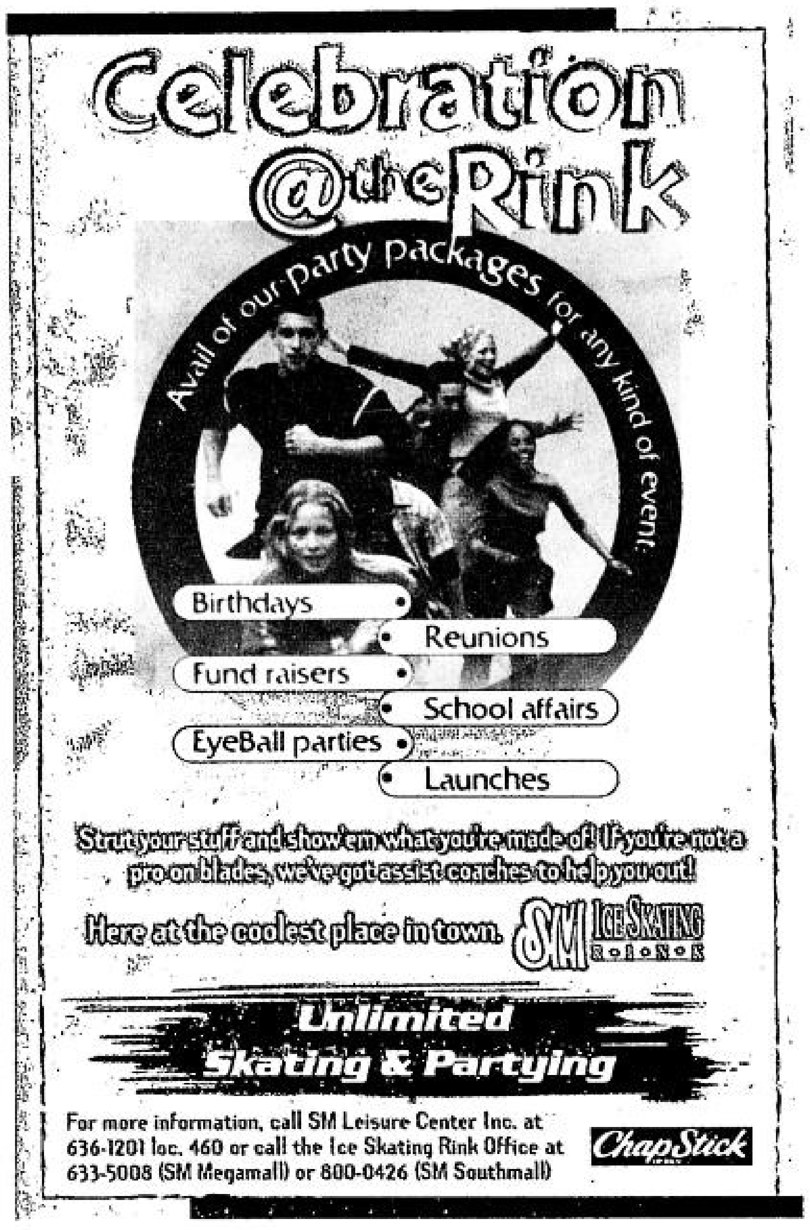
BEN Farrales

PHOTOS: BETOY JOHNSON

CZECH Ambassador Stanislav Slavicky and Mita Rufino

JAIME Laya and Rowena Quisumbing

NOLIE Hans, Meldy Cojuangco and Pitoy Moreno



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Politics intrudes into NCCA work again

COMMENTARY

By Jeannie E. Javelosa

A SENSE of hopelessness with the present government seems to have set in early. Despite meaningful attempts at good governance, there is the growing realization that for change to happen, every individual must do his/her share.

Government and its institutions do not hold the key. All sectors of society are facing a crisis of leadership. After the Filipino people successfully wielded their power once again to oust a corrupt president and install his constitutional successor, politics, bedfellow to power, is again creeping into every crevice of our society. Professionalism in government agencies seems likely to remain a dream.

Three weeks before he passed away, my uncle, National Artist Leandro Locsin, then chair of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), and I had a chat over the phone. His parting words,

POLITICS/ p.E3

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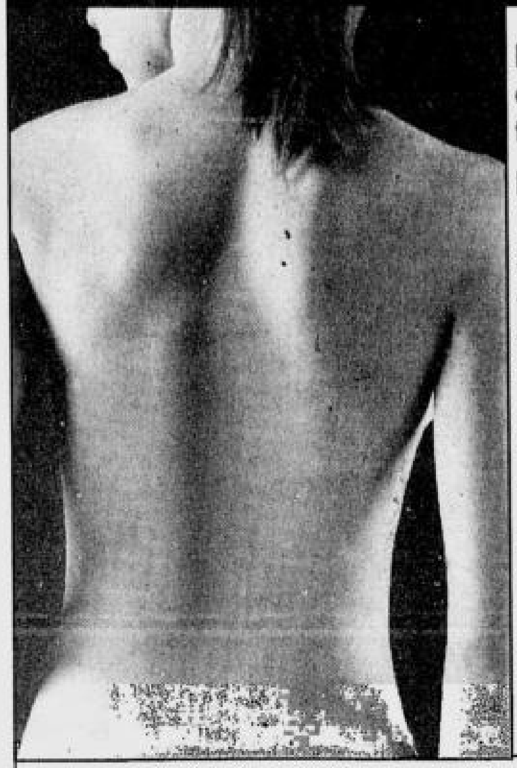

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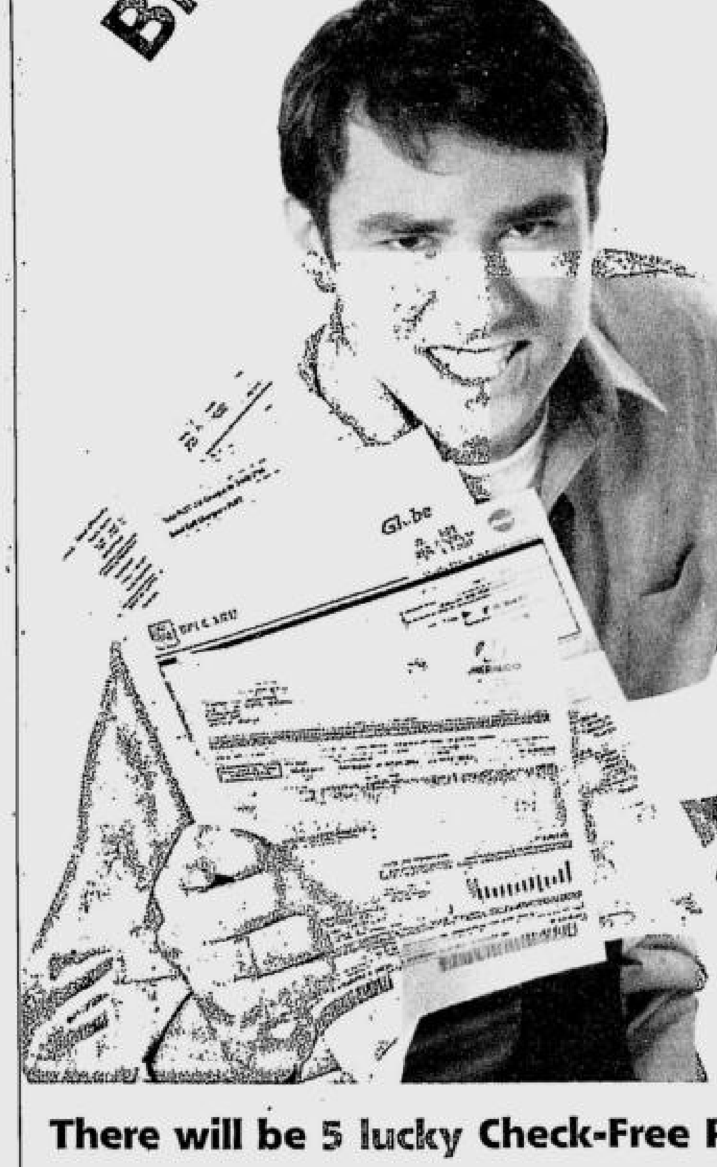

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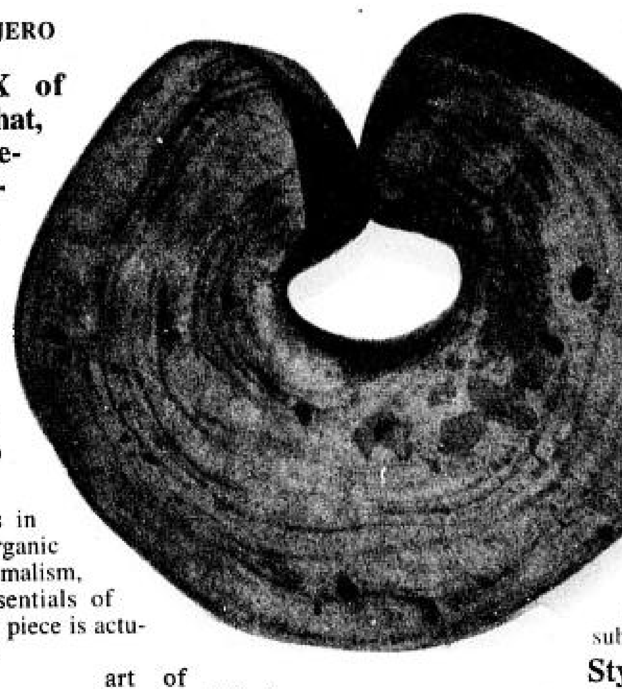
Sculpture that has an emotional affinity with nature

BY CONSTANTINO C. TEJERO

THE PARADOX of Minimalist Art is that, though it has reduced things to their basics (one shape, one color, one idea), the art piece itself can be replete with meaning, nuances and suggestions. This led one art historian to comment that "the style is easier to observe than to discuss."

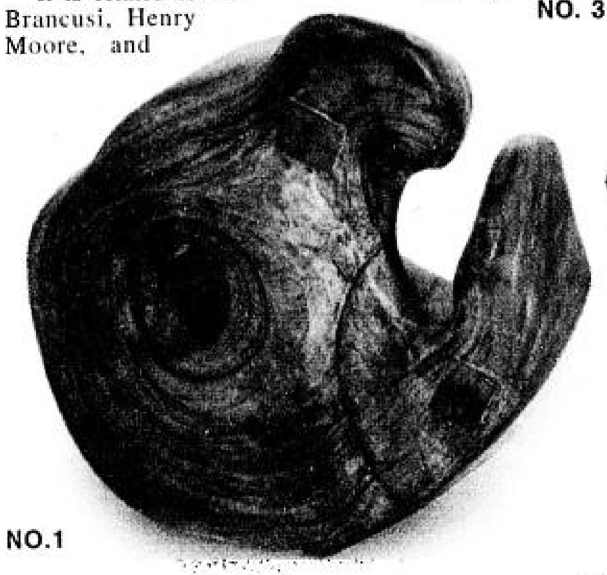
The five sculptural pieces in Pablo Mahinay's exhibit "Organic Forms" would belong to minimalism, pared as they are to the essentials of wood, and the paradox is, each piece is actually rich in visual vocabulary.



NO. 3

It is related to the art of Brancusi, Henry Moore, and especially Barbara Hepworth (particularly in her use of pierced holes and scooped-out hollows in wood). Consciously or not on Mahinay's part, the pieces seem to reference Miró's biomorphic abstraction as well.

These primary structures, free from surface decoration and nothing but pure form, is minimalism by way of primitivism. That is, they have their roots in ancient and primitive art, in this case African, Sumerian and Mexican sculpture, in which "mass and solidity take precedence over surface texture and detail." Here, detail is submerged in simple forms.



NO.1

Pared as they are to the essentials of wood, the pieces are actually rich in visual vocabulary

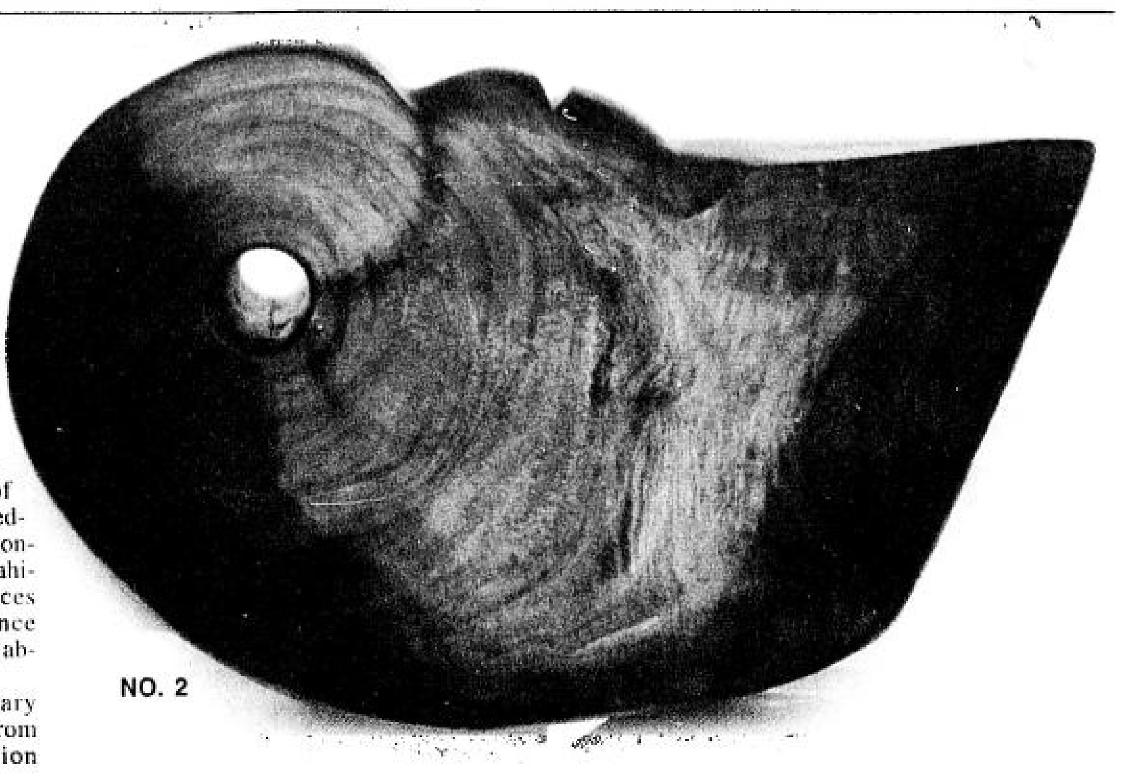
Style of reduction

The artist's method is direct carving (no modeling), with the material leading the artist's craftsmanship to evolve "a style of reduction of human and organic forms."

The nature of the material (shape, texture), being part of the conception of the artwork, dictates the stylization. The natural form is then reduced to its ultimate simplicity, often to abstraction.

These are freestanding forms in solid acacia wood, some with holes and hollows, curves and concavities chiseled in parts. Sanded and polished, the light-brown wood's natural grain and concentric annual rings surface beautifully. Their texture, their look has an "emotional affinity with nature."

What's more, we can imagine outlines of figures in these abstract objects. We seem to espy images from Miró, such as "Person Throwing Stone at a Bird."



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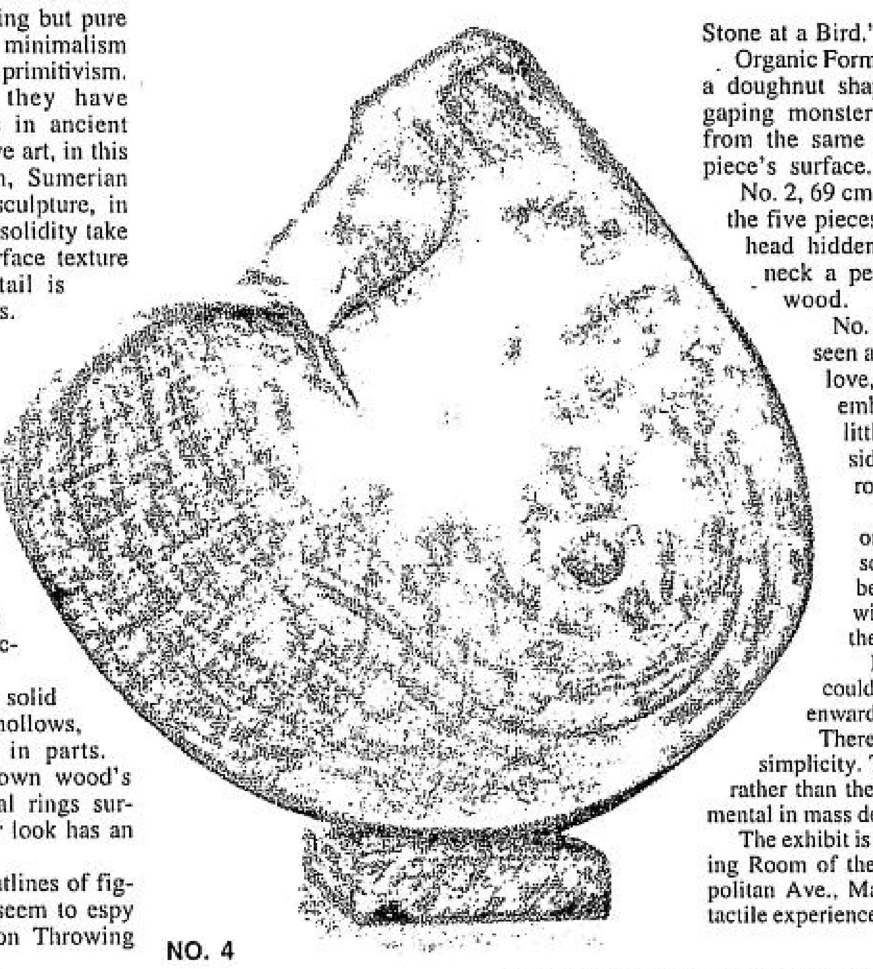


NO. 4

Organic Form No. 1, 93 cm x 86 cm x 32 cm, is a doughnut shape but with one side having a gaping monster mouth. Four small rectangles from the same wood have been glued on the piece's surface.

No. 2, 69 cm x 105 cm x 27 cm, the darkest of the five pieces, looks like a sleeping bird with head hidden in its wing, the curve of the neck a perfect circle pierced through the wood.

No. 3, 78 cm x 88 cm x 28 cm, can be seen as that universal symbol of mother love, the incomplete circle a form of embrace. You may tilt the piece a little and swing it gently from side to side, and then it becomes a mother rocking her child to sleep.

No. 4, 90 cm x 77 cm x 37 cm, the only one with a base, standing on a square piece of the same wood, could be a profile of the man on the moon, with scorched circles on both sides for the eyes.

No. 5, 77 cm x 100 cm x 27 cm, could be another Miró head, gaping heavenward, like a dog baying at the moon.

There is grandeur in these pieces' utter simplicity. This comes more from their shapes rather than their bulk, this effect of being monumental in mass despite the small scale.

The exhibit is ongoing until July 18, at The Drawing Room of the Metrostar Building, 1007 Metropolitan Ave., Makati City. It's a visual as well as tactile experience one shouldn't miss.

Bancod-Gaborni at West Gallery; Mesina at the Enterprise Center; Yuson at the Lopez Museum

ARTIST Rowena Bancod-Gaborni holds her latest solo painting exhibit at West Gallery, 4/L, Building A, Mandaluyong City on July 19-31. Works featured in "Stages" try to capture the most memorable chapters in a woman's life—childhood, first date to marriage and old age. They chronicle a modern woman's complicated yet interesting life. Call 634-1284.

MESINA AT THE ENTERPRISE CENTER. Painter Pol A. Mesina Jr. will hold his first one-man show of still-life paintings on July 18 at the Food Park at the Enterprise, 4/L, Enterprise Center, 6766 Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City. The exhibit will run until Aug. 18.

YUSON AT LOPEZ MUSEUM. Reggie Yuson's latest exhibit of sculptures, "Vertical Horizons," will be on view at the Lopez Museum Shop, G/F, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell, Makati City, from July 21 until Aug.13. Yuson's sculpture takes its cue from the industrial landscape and an urban sense of space. Call 898-0981.

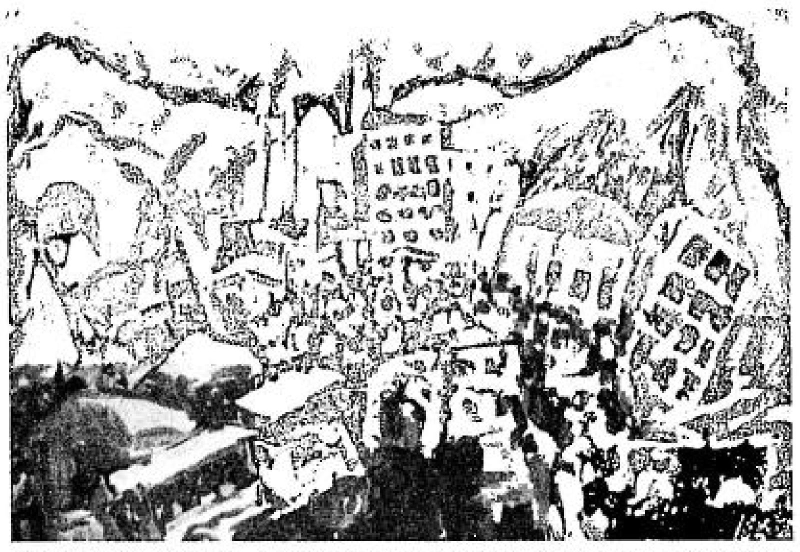
ISIDRO AT THE CRUCIBLE GALLERY. Raul G. Isidro, one of The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) awardee in the field of fine arts in 1979, teams up with American printmaker and art educator Amy Grogan-Soini in a print exhibit at the Crucible Gallery-Megamall, which opens July 17. Isidro, known for his acrylic abstract paintings mounted on perfect round canvases, will show his latest collage monoprints or one-of-a-kind prints on paper with his usual definitive spontaneous style. Soini uses cut-out intaglio collographs with Chine-Cole technique in her prints. The exhibit will run until Aug. 5.

MONTILLA AT SSS GALLERY. Impressionist painter Ricky Montilla is holding a one-man exhibit at the SSS Collection of Arts & Antique Gallery, 2/F SSS Building, East Avenue, QC. The exhibit runs until July 20.

CUNA AT THE MET. The Metropolitan Museum of Manila presents paintings by Rachy Cuna, Manila's well-loved icon of style and patron of the local art and cultural scene. "Journeast: Passages to Self-rediscovery" features Cuna's experimentation with minimalist renditions of black, red and gray colors. The Zen-inspired strokes illustrate the stages of the artist's journey to rediscovering his inner self. The exhibit is open July 27-Aug 11 at the Tall Galleries of the Met Museum. Call 523-7855.

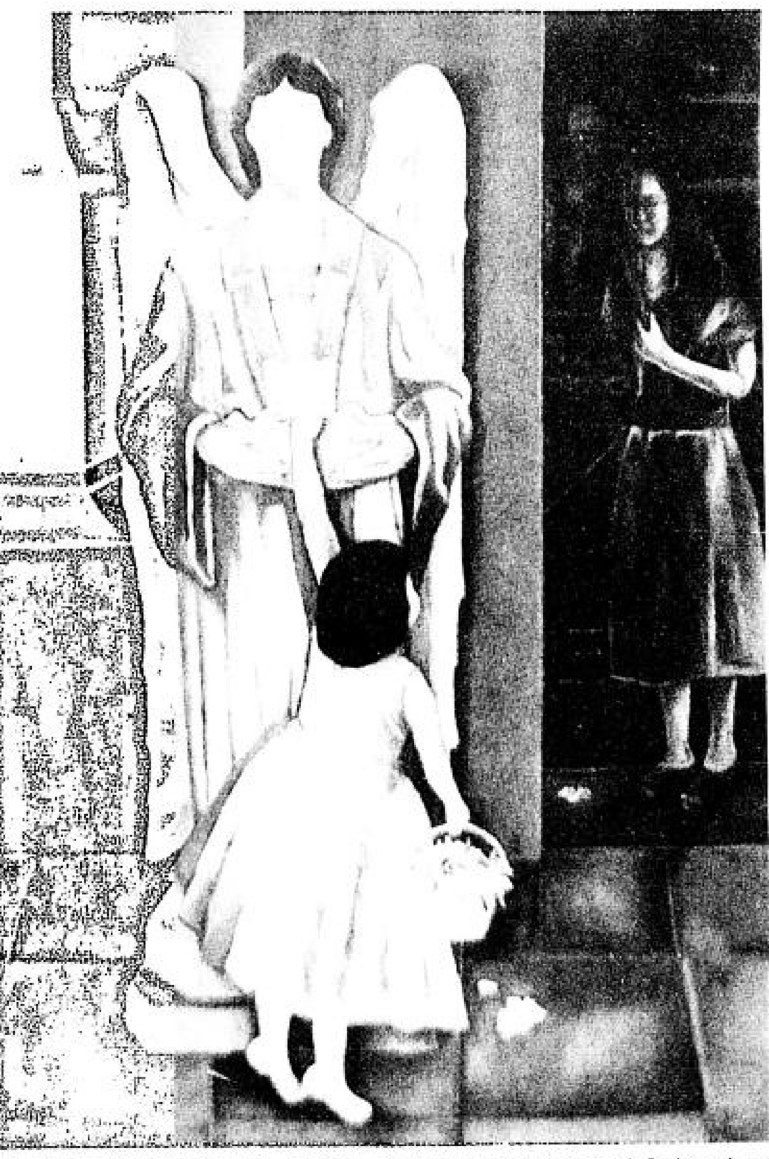
ANG I.N.K AT THE MET. The Metropolitan Museum of Manila presents an exhibition celebrating the 10 years of published and unpublished works by members of Ang Ilustrador ng Kabataan (Ang I.N.K.). Dubbed TEN: Ang Ilustrador ng Kabataan's 10th Year Anniversary Exhibition, it will open on July 30 at the Upper Level Galleries of the Met Museum. The exhibit runs until Sept. 1. Call 523-7855.

LECTURE. Architect Paolo Alcazaren will talk about some of the American period's most striking structures to show that heritage conservation should be a priority in the government's cultural agenda. The Lopez Memorial Museum luncheon lecture will be held 12 nn, July 24 at the Benpres Building's Executive Lounge, 5/F, Ortigas Center, Pasig. Call 631-2417 or 449-2355.



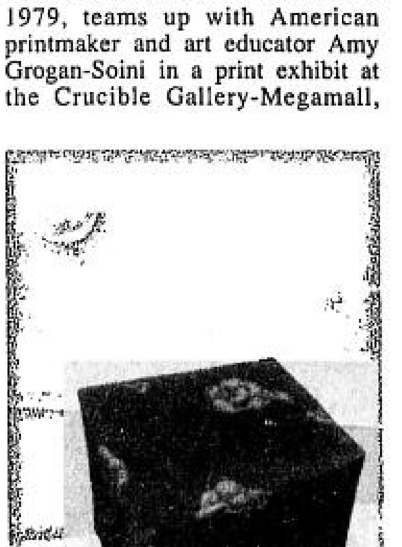
"SAN PABLO CITY, LAGUNA" is part "Sheer Vision," a solo exhibit by Mark Shellshear featuring his latest acrylic paintings and wood carvings. The exhibit runs until July 31 at Silahis Arts and Artifacts, 3/F Glorietta 4, Makati. Call 728-4961.

REGGIE Yuson's latest exhibit of sculpture, "Vertical Horizons," at the Lopez Museum



"A MOMENT WITH AN ANGEL," by Rowena Bancod-Gaborni, at West Gallery

JORG Schmeisser, world-renowned printmaker, shows one of the artworks during the opening of the exhibit "Groundwork" at the Australia Centre.



"SACRED CLOUD ON MY TABLE" by Raul Lebajo will be on view from July 24-Aug. 6, at the Art Center. Call 633-6687, 833-9815, 634-3261 and 831-9990.

A PRICELESS Onib Olmedo portrait was the grand prize in Chateau 1771's raffle promo, which capped Chateau's year-long 12th anniversary celebration. Before the grand draw, monthly raffles were held with a variety of prizes. Miriam Gerobin of Pasig City won the Olmedo portrait. Shown in photo are Ferdinand Tuazon (center), Gerobin's brother who received the award on her behalf; Jan Ayson (left), Chateau 1771 marketing assistant; and Chateau 1771's chef Vicky Rose Pacheco (right).

Differently abled and creative hold traveling exhibit

WHAT do a young adult with autism, an adult with hearing impairment, a young adult with orthopedic impairment and a youth with visual impairment have in common? They all love to paint and they will be sharing with the public their talent through a traveling exhibit titled "Four Artists Make a Difference."

Supported by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and the Persons with Disability Sectoral Council of the National Anti-Poverty Commission, the exhibit will be launched on July 19, 3 p.m. at the Atrium of SM Megamall Building A, Mandaluyong City. It features 20 paintings created by artists Jason de los Reyes, Julius Espinosa, Rico Ramos and Rizer Lucio.

The exhibit is in celebration of National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week and will run from July 19-21.

Special guests for the launching are NCCA chair Dr. Jaime C. Laya, DSWD Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman, NAPC lead convenor Teresita Deles, Rep. Neptali Gonzales, Mayor Benhur Abalos, NAPC-PWD Commissioner Ricardo Calapatia and Kapisanan ng Mga Sundalong May Kapasanan sa Pilipinas Inc. (KSKPI) chair Oscar Taleon.

Succeeding venues will be at the Baguio City Hall from Aug. 3-5 and at the Olongapo City Convention Center from Aug. 8-10. Future destinations include Cagayan de Oro City, Davao City and Zamboanga City in Mindanao; Bacolod City, Cebu City and Iloilo City in the Visayas.

Politics intrudes into NCCA work again

(From page E1)

which on hindsight were actually his goodbye message to me, were: "Jeannie, keep away from all the politics of the culture scene." I hear his words as I try to keep away from what is happening around me. But how can one keep quiet when something is wrong? How could one not take a stand on something that is so much a part of one's life?

So history repeats itself in the culture scene. former President Joseph Estrada installed a new board at the Cultural Center of the Philippines via a process that went against the institution's by-laws, rendering the CCP ineffective as two groups claimed to be its rightful officers. A case seeking a court ruling on who really heads the CCP is still pending in the Supreme Court.

Now Malacañang, with its new tenant, is about to repeat the CCP fiasco at the NCCA. In trying to appoint people to the NCCA, Malacañang does not seem to take into consideration the real needs of the arts and culture sector. It seems to see issues only as another aspect of the dance of politics and power.

I was at the Gamaba awarding ceremonies in Malacañang on March 2. In her speech, President Macapagal-Arroyo said the NCCA should remain "autonomous" and independent while continuing its programs to support the development of the arts and the culture. The President seemed to know quite well that the NCCA's by-laws provide that its chair be elected through a process participated in by representatives of both government and private sectors.

But now the Office of the President appears to have changed its policy. Pressure is apparently being applied on members of the NCCA Board that seems to be trying to circumvent the commission's by-laws to carry out the wishes of Malacañang. The Office of the President, through a simple telephone call, has instructed the NCCA board to defer elections. While it is clear that the NCCA choice of chairman will always be to Malacañang, the culture sector has tried to make sure that whoever sits there really has its interests and is acceptable to the artistic community.

NCCA has had a steady growth. During the stint of Lindy Locsin as chair, with Carmen Padilla as executive director, the commission grew from a small office under the Office of the President into a network of artists and institutions in the different fields of culture and the arts. Padilla actively sought linkages, as she made herself visible at all cultural and diplomatic events. When she left, the institution was implementing 150-200 projects a year. If there was a complaint about the NCCA then, it was that it lacked substance, direction and focus.

When Jaime Laya became chair, finishing Locsin's term following the latter's death, he brought to the NCCA his hands-on style, understanding of the bureaucratic structure and his management strength. With executive director Virgilio Almario, he systematized procedures and developed focused programs. The NCCA is now implementing 400-500 projects. The complaint about the NCCA now is that it has become too bureaucratic, and that majority of the decisions are made by the board and the secretariat.

I am not lobbying for anyone. Personally, I am not for Dr. Jaime Laya, or for former Sen. Leticia Shahani, or for the other names being floated around like Pablo Trillana of the National Historical Institute and Vic Ordonez, who was formerly with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco). What I am for is professionalism in the cultural scene, keeping the best interests of the sector in mind. Politics, although it cannot be completely eliminated, should take a back seat to existing NCCA laws.

Malacañang must lead by example in following the laws. It should also respect the groups and minds that drew up these laws.

I see the changes at NCCA as part of its growth. I believe that the right person will be put there at the right time and for a purpose. What I am standing for, and my sentiments are echoed by those of us who want to help professionalize the cultural scene and bring a clear vision to our institutions, are:

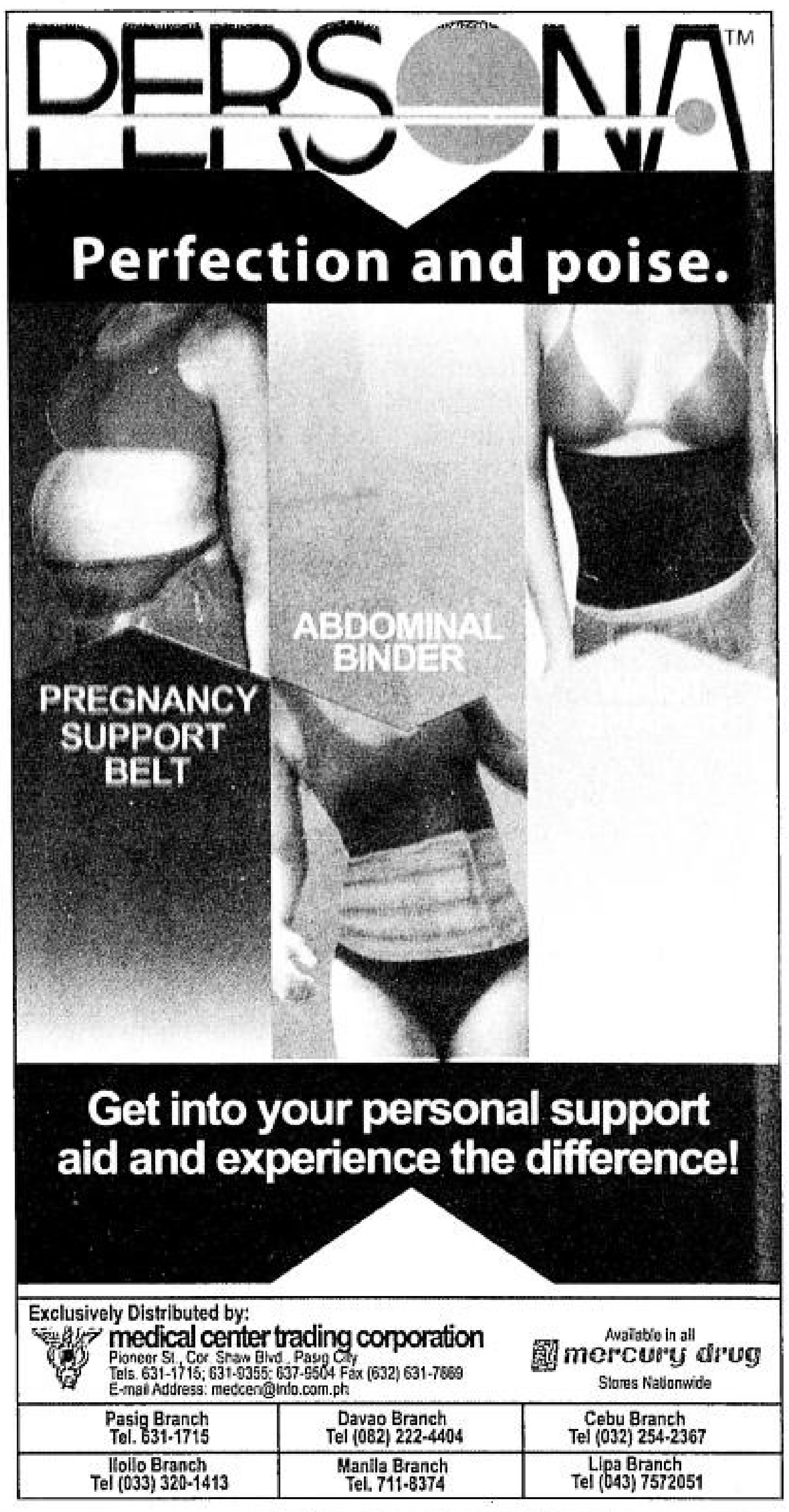
First, the prescribed procedure should be followed to elect the new chair. Second, the chair should preferably come from the private sector and not a government agency. This is in keeping with the spirit of the NCCA law encouraging a "partnership with the private sector." The NCCA chair must be able to bridge the divide between government and private sector, bring a vision to the job, work to expand fund sources for culture and, more importantly, push culture to the forefront of the private sector's consciousness.

It is a major drawback in our country that government agencies are not strong enough to withstand political pressures. When a new lèader comes, good existing programs are sometimes scrapped, even if it results in a waste of public funds. Instead of pursuing and even expanding good programs, new ones are implemented, which will in turn be dumped when new people assume leadership.

The NCCA, unlike many government agencies, has grown steadily. Its programs have developed with the strengthening of networks with cultural agencies, local government units and, more recently, with Philippine diplomatic missions. Whoever assumes leadership next must give the good programs and existing system a chance. It should review existing programs and laws through dialogues with members of the sector. The new officers should be ready to compromise without losing sight of the level of professional excellence that everyone is trying to achieve. If the present Laya-Almario team is to stay, it must effect the changes demanded by the various groups.

The great challenge is to work together and openly discuss things and reach a consensus on what is best for the majority. Tension and conflicts only have one objective: growth. Only dialogue will ease tensions.

If the NCCA becomes a divided house once again, and tensions rise anew, the artists (and the people!) stand to be losers.



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Deadline for Gawad Pamanang Arkitektura entries set

AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL First Gawad Pamanang Arkitektura 2001 given last April, the UAP-Center for Filipino Architecture with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts is launching the second phase of competition on the documentation of heritage structures in the country. Dubbed as a mini Gawad, the second phase of competition now focuses on vernacular architecture.

While the initial contest dealt with the search and documentation of Spanish and American colonial period structures, vernacular architecture refers to the architecture belonging to the ethnic tradition which makes use of traditional and indigenous materials and construction methods. There is no specific time frame limiting this category.

UAP-CFA executive director Cristina V. Turalba, FUAP, announced the deadline for the submission of entries is on Sept. 7. Entries sent via mail must be postmarked not later than Sept. 1. Presentation of finalists and awarding of prizes will be in October during the National Conference of Architects in Cebu City. Send your entries to Lena Lubi, UAP-CFA Secretariat, 15/F ACT Tower, 135 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Salcedo Village, Makati City, tel. 816-2542, telefax 817-7852.

The competition is open to all architects and nonarchitects, UAP and non-UAP members, professionals and students.

Subject of documentation includes: civic/institutional (*torogan*); commercial (*tianggelpalengke*); industrial (workshop, crafts area); recreational (play area); residential (houses, *bahay kubo*, shanties); transportation (*daungan*, pier); and landscape (parks, gardens, *dap-ay*).

The whole exercise, led by the United Architects of the Philippines, is intended to produce quality documentation of various building typologies to help in the preservation of heritage structures and sites which, to them, are slowly disappearing due to the effects of globalization, commercialization and neglect.

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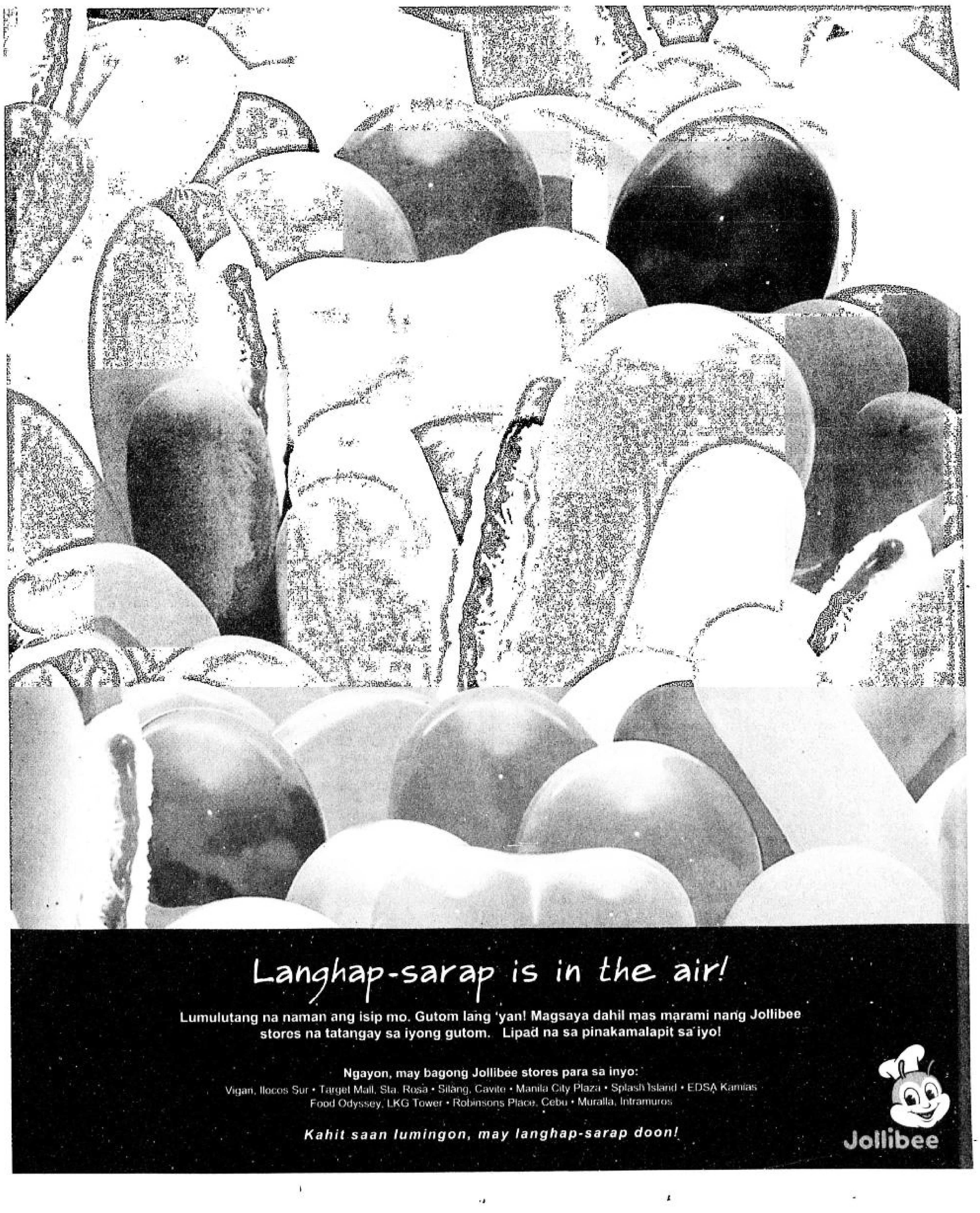

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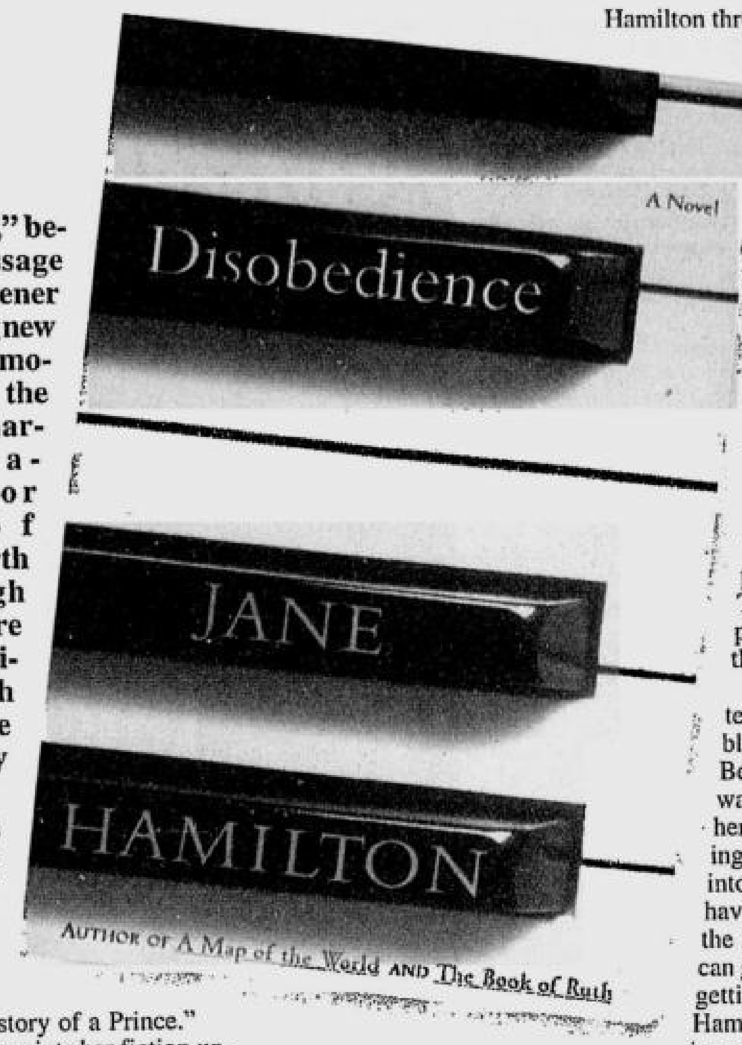
Calamity Jane

Disobedience
by Jane Hamilton
Doubleday, New York
2000, 273 pages

By Ruel S. de Vera



REVIEW

"THIS is an old story," begins an e-mail message from Elizabeth Gardener Shaw, "there is nothing new to it." Elizabeth is the mother of Henry Shaw, the narrator of Jane Hamilton's fourth novel. And though Henry tells the entire story that is "Disobedience," it is Elizabeth who is the heart of the book. It is thoroughly her story.

Hamilton has done an impressive job picking at the scabs and wounds of the modern American family in her previous novels, "A Map of the World," "The Book of Ruth" and "The Short History of a Prince." With "Disobedience," she points her fiction unerringly on the age-old battle between the lure of adultery and the stability of family. The Shaws are a vividly eccentric family transplanted from green Vermont to urban Chicago; every family member has a secret life.

But it is Elizabeth who has the most secret life of all. A pianist and seemingly the most normal of the Shaws, she has been having an affair with a violinist right under the noses of her family. "Disobedience" spins out from the eye of the hurricane; the moment that 17-year-old Henry, troubled and brilliant, discovers the affair through his mother's e-mail messages. From there, Henry distills his family's travails and his personal journey to adulthood in this bizarre household. His father, Kevin, can only be described as a Zen master-socialist history teacher, while his 13-year-old sister Elvira is obsessed with the American civil war and seems to want to be male. In the meantime, Henry is deciding what he wants to be and thinks he's in love with a nymph-like girl named Lily.

But the dramatic center of "Disobedience" is the conflicted Elizabeth, who, in Henry's heartfelt if fractured narrative, is divided into her different selves by reference: housewife Beth, daughter Elizabeth, or adulterous lover Liza. Henry tries to grasp what could possibly make his mother think of leaving them, this man named Richard Polloco: "He was a person she might be able to comfort, a man she could lead out of the dark past, going from light to light to light." In Beth, Hamilton has a dizzyingly unsure and ever-changing muse of misery to write about.

Hamilton throws an entire redwood forest of symbols and subplots at the ready reader, adding a twist of extra flavor with a tarot card reader, a feminist book club and Henry's best friend, the poet Karen. But the best gimmick has got to be the wildcard that is Elvira, wearing a Civil War uniform to a wedding, who shaves her head one day just for the heck of it, and lives to reenact entire Civil War skirmishes by pretending to be a drummer boy. Yet it is Elvira's coming of age that is "Disobedience's" most poignant counterpoint, a Trojan Horse of a plot being pulled into the burning city that is the Shaw family.

As a narrator, Henry is entertainingly witty, most notably in this apt description of Beth's messages: "Clearly she was out of her mind, although her writing skills were improving; she looked to be coming into her own even if she was having a psychotic break." But the narrative, full and complex, can get overly so, with the reader getting lost in the time travel that Hamilton uses, with Henry staging scenes from different parts of his memory. Most noticeable is how Henry seems to understand the overwhelming number of women around him too well even if he says he does not. Hamilton possesses her lead character a bit much and it is mostly her that reader hear as "Disobedience" nears its inevitable conclusion.

As Beth finally resolves her inner conflict, Henry finds himself engulfed in a spring full of change on all fronts. Hamilton accomplishes a controlled conclusion to "Disobedience," one that is both realistic, painful and wistful. Many loves and relationships are either abandoned or strengthened as Hamilton, through Henry, steps back and regards this American family and reflects. "How strange they were," Henry says of his parents, "perhaps only lovers and children speak softly, lying together in the dark. If you are not lovers, you sit up talking. You keep the light on."

Indeed this is an old story. History is the clandestine theme of "Disobedience": personal, family and general. All of the Shaws peddle some sort of history, yet it is the intersection of their histories, secret and open, that turns the book into a read that is puzzling and complex, yet tasty and intoxicating, like literary licorice. Jane Hamilton invites the reader into the den of the despairing, delightful and difficult life of the family as we know it with "Disobedience." Only the most timid and conventional readers would dare disobey her.

> More intoxicating glimpses into the dysfunctional American family from the author of 'A Map of the World'

Available in hardcover from National Bookstore and Powerbooks

Author of the Month writes on child education

BENNETT

YOU are your child's first teacher. And you will remain his most important teacher all throughout the learning phase.

But what often happens is that parents slowly relinquish their role as teachers soon after the child reaches grade school age and enters his first classroom. They hand the responsibility over to the school teachers having convinced themselves that school teachers know more about teaching than they do. And they entirely give up their important role in their child's education as they succumb to the pressures of career and making a living.

Yet, what is education?

Education goes beyond the 3Rs; it goes beyond expensive schools and good grades. Even good grades don't necessarily mean your child is getting an education.

Education means forming the person, molding his character. Education means helping your child develop virtues necessary for him to function as a responsible God-fearing adult. Character formation must develop side by side with academic education. Formation is a process that requires your active involvement for at least 15 years, the first 15 years of the child's life.

William J. Bennett, the author of "The Educated Child" says: "For good or ill, you are always your child's most influential teacher. Even when he reaches school age, you are still the dean at home, the chief academic officer. The more involved you are, the better your child's chances of getting a good education. If you begin to remove yourself from the learning process, those chances start to plummet. If you turn over your most important responsibilities to others, you may doom his school career. This amounts to educational abandonment, a pernicious form of child neglect. You need to be in charge of your child's education. So take charge."

Bennett, America's conservative voice of morality and a professional education advocate who has served under President Reagan and President Bush (the elder), has written and edited a series of popular books including "The Book of Virtues for Young People," "The Moral Compass," "The Book of Virtues" and "The Children's Book of Virtues." These, along with "The Educated Child," are available at National Bookstore, which has chosen Bennett Author of the Month for July.

Bennett believes that time is one element in a child's education that cannot be compromised. Parents often say that they give their children "quality time" whey they actually mean they don't have time. One hour of quality time is definitely not equal to 10 hours of quality time. When parents spend a significant amount of time in supervising their child's studies, they implicitly tell that they care and that they are able to stay on top of the situation.

The amount of time will depend on the child's abilities and the level of difficulty of the subject matter on hand. Investing time in your children's future is clearly time well spent for the benefits to be gained from doing so are immeasurable.

Many children think that getting good grades is the whole point of learning. While good grades may reflect a certain aptitude, it does not always mean that they are learning. Intelligent children are more prone to failing into this trap. In the early years of schools, they get by on sheer intelligence. As the subject matter becomes tougher, however, children with poor study habits start falling behind.

A better basis for determining whether your child is developing the right attitude toward studying is his ability to study regularly and consistently. A child who studies daily is more likely to know and remember the subject matter at hand. Memory is developed by repetition. The more frequent the reviews, the better.

His ability to study regularly means he is able to postpone his desire for pleasure to a later time so he can complete the task at hand. This develops patience, perseverance and fortitude. Fortitude is a virtue that will carry a child through college and through life.

Traditional values lie at the heart of Bennett's tenets on educating the child with virtues. One of the most stunning (to the modern parent) of his tenets is his insistence that the most important element in parents' involvement in their child's development is unconditional love and approval.

Inside every successful person is a child who has a deep, unconditional, even irrational support from at least one adult. For most children, it is one or both parents. For some, like Winston Churchill, whose nanny strongly believed in him, it might be someone other than the family.

When a child feels that his parents love him for his own sake and not for his performance, he can confidently face all obstacles in his path. No matter what happens, whether he succeeds or fails, he knows that he will still be loved and accepted at home.

We all want our children to succeed. To achieve this, we should never abdicate our role as teacher. We have to be hands-on managers of their education. We supervise, we encourage, we motivate. It is true that despite all our best efforts, we are never quite sure that all will turn out right. When we reach this point only our faith in God and our children will pull us through.

The Children's Book of Virt
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BENNETT'S books

PBBY goes on a crusade to promote children's literature

By Neni Sta. Romana-Cruz

DON'T let all these acronyms confuse you. For love of children's literature in the country, get to know what PBBY, NCBD, InK, IBBY stand for, literally and otherwise.

If the Philippine Board on Books for Young People (PBBY) is engaged in a flurry of e-mails these days, it only means that the National Children's Book Day is nigh. On July 17, the 18th NCBD will be celebrated with special ceremonies at the National Library and the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

The choice of day, the third Tuesday in July, coincides with the publication date of what is considered the very first Filipino tale for children, Jose Rizal's "The Monkey and the Turtle" in Trubner's Oriental Record in London.

The activities leading up to NCBD are overwhelming, considering that the PBBY, an organization of volunteers with no funding to speak of, spearheads the event year after year. There is the ongoing Children's Book Festival at the Shangri-La Plaza from July 14-22. On NCBD itself, awards will be handed out to preschool teacher Kristine Canon, winner of this year's PBBY-Salanga Writers' Prize for her "Bakit Matagal ang Sundo Ko?" and Mariano Ching, whose illustrations won the PBBY Illustrators' Prize. The Achievement Award for outstanding contribution to the promotion of the cause of reading and books for the young will be given to the trailblazing professional group of children's book illustrators, Ang Ilustrador ng Kabataan, now all of 10 years.

PBBY board members

PBBY officers Beaulah Taguiwalo, Luis Gatmaitan and Ani Almario

PBBY is presently chaired by Beaulah Taguiwalo. Other officers are Luis Gatmaitan, vice chair; RayVi Sunico, treasurer; Ani Almario, secretary-general. The board is made up of representatives from different sectors, 10 in all: Mercy Abad (research); Emily Abrera (mass media); Karina Africa-Bolasco (booksellers); Neni Sta. Romana-Cruz (book reviewers); Luis Gatmaitan (writers); Rizalina Labanda (educators); Luisito Pascua (storytellers); Felicitas Rosal (librarians); Beaulah Pedregosa Taguiwalo (illustrators); Ramon C. Sunico (publishers). Honorary members are long-time PBBY associates, Angelica Cabanero, Gloria Rodriguez and Rene Villanueva.

Completing the board are four permanent institution members: The Cultural Center of the Philippines, represented by Armita Rufino; The National Library, represented by Adoracion Mendoza; Children's Communication Center, represented by Ani Rosa Almario; Museo Pambata Foundation Inc., represented by Cristina Lim-Yuson. Honorary chair is Lucrecia Kasilag, National Artist and founding chair of PBBY who continues to attend meetings faithfully these days on her motorized bike.

PBBY chair Beaulah Taguiwalo is at the moment finalizing the renewal membership requirements for the International Board on Books for Young People based in Europe, which will earn the PBBY the right to nominate a living children's writer or illustrator to the 2002 Hans Christian Andersen Award. As official Philippine chapter, PBBY will also be able to nominate books published in the country for the 2002 IBBY Honor List, a collection of the best in children's literature all over the world, in three categories: writing, illustration and translation.

When she is not preoccupied with PBBY business, Beaulah finds time for her other interests, for she is also an illustrator, a writer, an editor, a book designer. One of her more recent works was the design for Jim Paredes' book, "Humming in My Universe." Showing how she continues to hone her skills in math, a subject she used to teach, she says: "I miss it (math) when all I have done for weeks at a stretch was to read or write or draw, and I perform basic exercises every now and then, like crocheting little doilies, to make sure my head will remember to function in a way that is different from when I am writing or illustrating."

Luis Gatmaitan, PBBY vice chair, is a practicing pediatrician and award-winning author of 15 children's books and several books for adults, all written in what has been described as Filipino which cascades - thanks to his Talavera, Nueva Ecija childhood. This doctor, who writes to unwind, is amused every time it is asked of him, "*Totoo ba siyang* doctor or *totoong* writer?"

In pretty much the same manner as the medical field having vowed to eradicate polio and other childhood diseases by a target date, Luis says he hopes that illiteracy in the country will be eradicated and that functional literacy will be increased. His latest books are the continuing—fortunately, for today's kids—"Mga Kuwento ni Tito Dok" series, which tackles medical and health topics for children, mysteries and wonders of the human body as leukemia, a blood corpuscle gone adventuring, a toothache, a pregnancy. If there is a Lola Basyang, why not a Tito Dok?

Love for books

While the country likes to boast about its high literacy rate, it cannot speak of the habit of reading as a widespread preoccupation, observes Luis. He points out that the love for reading appears is to be directly linked to the state of the economy of a nation. Parents in the countryside do not read, because they do not have access to books and bookstores. Thus, their children, bereft of role models or adults who read, do not develop the reading habit, either. And should they be fortunate enough to have school or neighborhood libraries, libraries are associated with negative images of not being kid-friendly because they are always hushed into total silence.

His childhood would have been no different were it not for a *lola* who loved to read comics, a businessman father who loved telling stories to his children and a teacher for a mother.

> Through its activities, the board has raised the level of awareness about the value of reading, even if it's just a series of small steps at a time

Ani Almario is PBBY's secretary-general. She was thrust into this position and also the roles of product development officer and general administrative officer of Adarna House when her father, Virgilio Almario, the moving force behind the establishment of the PBBY 19 years ago, assumed office at the National Commission for Culture and the Arts as its executive director. Adarna is acknowledged to be the pioneer in children's publishing in the country, long before it was not fashionable to dabble in publishing children's books, and remains the largest publishing house today.

Even when Ani used to kid that she is Adarna's COO (child of owner), she was so competent and so comfortable with her new responsibilities one would think the sudden transition had been long prepared for. "I studied economics. I think the best preparation for my work now is all the reading I've done, all the exposure I've had to all kinds of books—this has helped me be open to all sorts of ideas and innovations when it comes to making children's books." She is excited at the thought of being in a position to help promote and propagate original Filipino children's literature—and seeing as early as now, that there are more publishers venturing into children's books and the books are improving in quality.

So much remains to be done. Ani sees the PBBY continuing to move to new frontiers in its crusade to promote children's literature in the country.

High degree of commitment

Luis says that although the board only meets monthly over an often boisterous lunch, its members show a high degree of commitment that impresses him. His is not the only frenetic schedule and it somehow conveys to him what is expected of him, too. Through its year-round activities, he points out that the PBBY has been able to raise the level of public awareness about children's books and the value of reading, even if it seems like it is just a series of small steps at a time.

In untiringly pushing for reading. Beaulah borrows the words of Mario Vargas Llosa in his essay, "Why Literature?", a beautiful piece e-mailed to the board by PBBY treasurer, poet and publisher RayVi Sunico. The passage eloquently captures why the PBBY does what it does: "… A person who does not read, or reads little, or reads only trash, is a person with an impediment: he can speak much but he will say little, because his vocabulary is deficient in the means for self-expression… If we wish to avoid the impoverishment of our imagination, and the disappearance of the precious dissatisfaction that refines our sensibility and teaches us to speak with eloquence and rigor, and the weakening of our freedom, then we must act. More precisely, we must read."

E-mail the author at nenisrc@hotmail.com

DR. Matilde Valdez and Susan Ong

MAROT Moreno, Angela del Rosario, Amalie Azanza, Marilou Tuazon Guingona and Ellie Cabarrus

Women hold regular gab fests–but about Shakespeare

(From page E8)

that may be right or wrong, and [face] the consequences that come with those choices. Ethics becomes important in the life of an individual. The morality of actions takes on greater meaning. You think about these things, and take them with you when you go home or back to work," she says.

Learning together

Dr. Valdez, a retired professor from the University of the Philippines Graduate School (psychology), says learning can even be more fun when it happens with friends and colleagues. She says the club's activity goes beyond book-reading. "It's also people-watching. When you find out about their reactions to a particular text, you learn something. They see something you may not have seen because, like you, they're drawing from their own wealth of experience. You come out of the room a little wiser."

Facilitator "Bibot" Amador, whom the members fondly regard as "professor," makes sure discussions maintain their high energy levels.

The group discussed Kazuo Ishiguro's "When We Were Orphans," his latest novel after a five-year hiatus. This time, the highly acclaimed Japanese author of "The Remains of the Day" uses the detective-thriller genre to reveal a trauma that is still festering after many years.

Critics have regarded "When We Were Orphans" as more of a psychological exploration than an actual whodunit. The Literature Club ladies started one discussion on this thread.

"Isn't this more of the story of a guy looking for his parents?" asks Susan. "It's not like he has to solve a crime, but it's like he's searching for his roots..."

"It is a search for self-realization," Bibot affirms. "The young Christopher had a close bond with his mother. The sudden separation must have been wrenching. He had to solve the crime. It was an open wound."

"That's true," agrees Marot beside her, but she adds that it is apparently just one aspect of the complex character. "Christopher did it for personal reasons, but he also did it with a sense of duty. That was the only way he could be true to himself..."

"Sense of duty, that's right," Bibot pounces on the word. "One critic commented on this about Ishiguro's works. The author seemed to carry a keen sense of duty." She paused a while, musing, "Is that why, though he's a Japanese immigrant to Britain, he could capture England's culture so well? Is there something similar about their cultures?"

Animated discussion

Other voices soon joined in, and the discussion became more animated, without losing its sense of direction. Some mentioned the hierarchical social structures, which let everyone knew of their "proper place." Others brought up the strong sense of nationhood, which can elevate duty above all else.

"There can be a price, though," someone says. "Christopher Banks seemed so... distant and detached. He was single-minded in his pursuit that he forgot to develop relationships with other people."

"The same thing is true of Ishiguro's other character in his 'Remains of the Day,' " somebody adds. "Remember the butler? He served his master so faithfully he didn't even allow himself to fall in love."

"Because love would take him from his duties, or so he thought," another Lit Club member says.

Bibot Amador is obviously happy with the way the Literature Club is encouraging members to read and having a good time doing it. Prior to her success in professional theater, Bibot was a college professor at St. Joseph's, immersing young minds in Shakespeare, Voltaire, Browning and other classical authors.

"Reading literature makes one more sensitive," she explains. "It opens up your mind to the other great minds of this world. You become more conscious of your environment. And, ultimately, you would want to get involved to make it a better place."

Book launch caps Madz's musical event series

"A LIFE Shaped by Music," a literary masterpiece on National Artist for Music, Prof. Andrea O. Veneracion, and the Philippine Madrigal Singers (Madz), is set to be launched on July 29 at the Main Theatre Lobby, Cultural Center of the Philippines. The book launch serves as the culminating activity of a string of musical events held in honor of Veneracion's outstanding musical artistry. The launching program will be followed by a special gala concert by the Madz at the CCP Main Theatre.

Written by award-winning poet Dr. Marie Marjorie Evasco, "A Life Shaped by Music" is an inspiring biography of Veneracion whose unbridled passion for the choral art has molded the Madz to become a national treasure it is today. Considered a landmark publication in the annals of Philippine choral music, the milestone memoir also pays tribute to the Madz's unprecedented choral achievements and historic firsts that defined its musical legacy in the last 38 years. The book will be sold with an optional companion CD of the same title in which the best songs performed by various batches of the Madz are featured.

Evasco is a recipient of the Outstanding Teacher Award given by the Metrobank Foundation. She has penned numerous essays, journals and anthologies, and authored books of poems, one of which, "The Dreamweavers," won a Gintong Aklat Award.

Prior to the Madz's July 29 highlight, surprise musical events were organized in honor of Veneracion's notable contributions to choral music. These included "Chanters of the Flame," a thanksgiving Mass with the Madz Et Al, the family of choirs handled and conducted by alumni and present members of the Madz; "Musicians Wrestle Everywhere," a reunion of Madz alumni, members and friends; "A National Artist's Legacy," a special exhibit on the life of Veneracion at the CCP; and "The Gift of Song," an exclusive homecoming concert that featured Madz alumni Ma. Cristina Viguilla-Navarro, Sal'my Neo Malaki and Maryjo Palencia who, as acclaimed solo performing artists, are now based abroad. Earlier this year, the Madz successfully released its CD and cassette recordings, "Madz in Love" and "Madz Around the World."

Call Alfred Samonte at 831-4015 or (0918) 909-4073, or call the CCP Ticket Box Office at 832-1125.

100% Discount

Or simply put ... a freebie!

As a way of thanking the numerous families that have made Club Noah Isabelle their choice beach holiday destination, Club Noah Isabelle is offering all families, whether repeaters or first timers, FREE accommodation, FREE meals, FREE activities and other fun-filled activities to one child for every family booked.

This special offer may be availed during our regular season, peak season and promo season dates. Local residents, expatriates, balikbayan and foreign tourists may avail of this limited offer.

For more information on our ongoing special packages, contact your favorite travel agent.

Club Noah
ISABELLE

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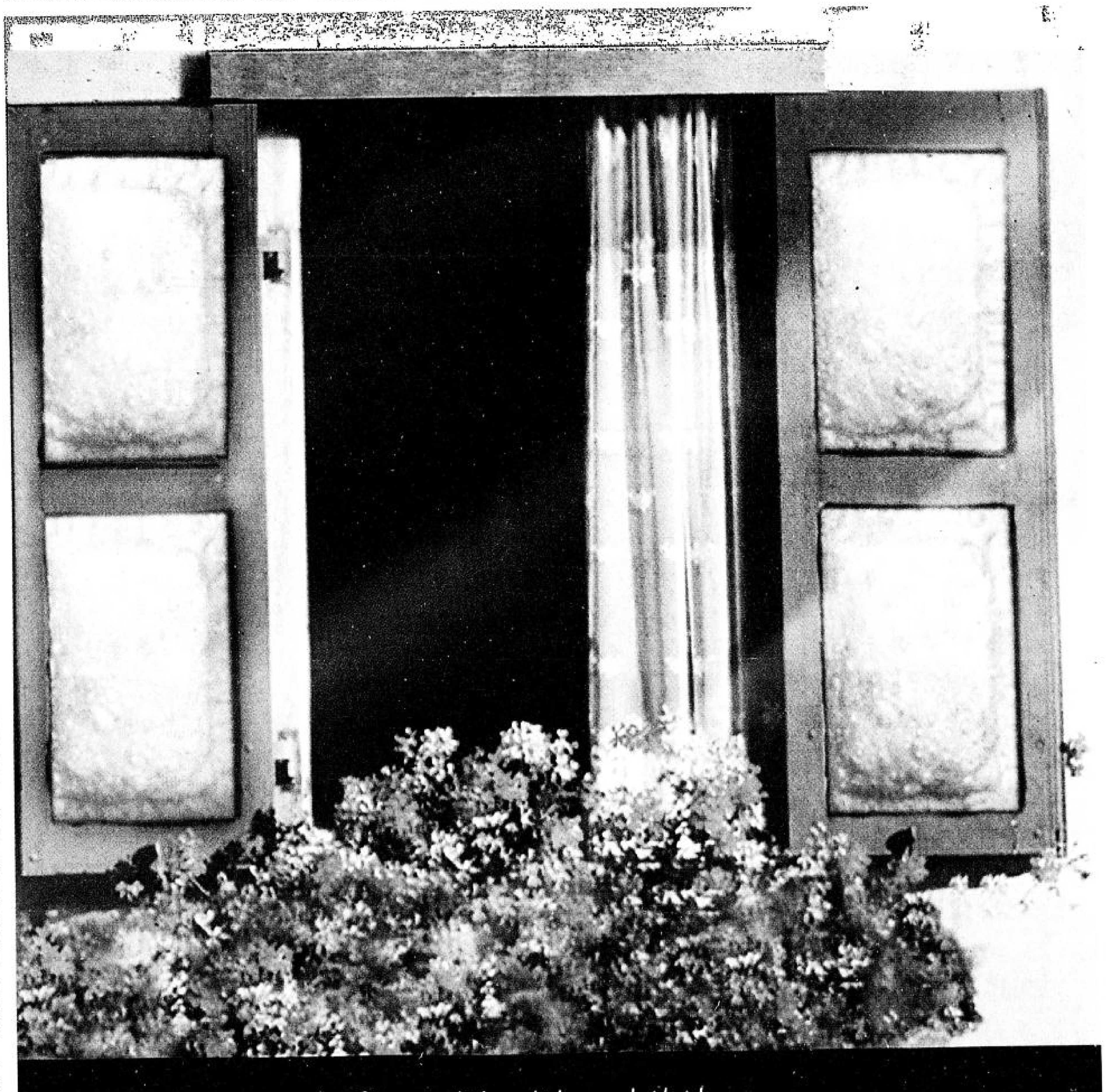
*Conditions apply



Pie-ulit-ulit nakikita...

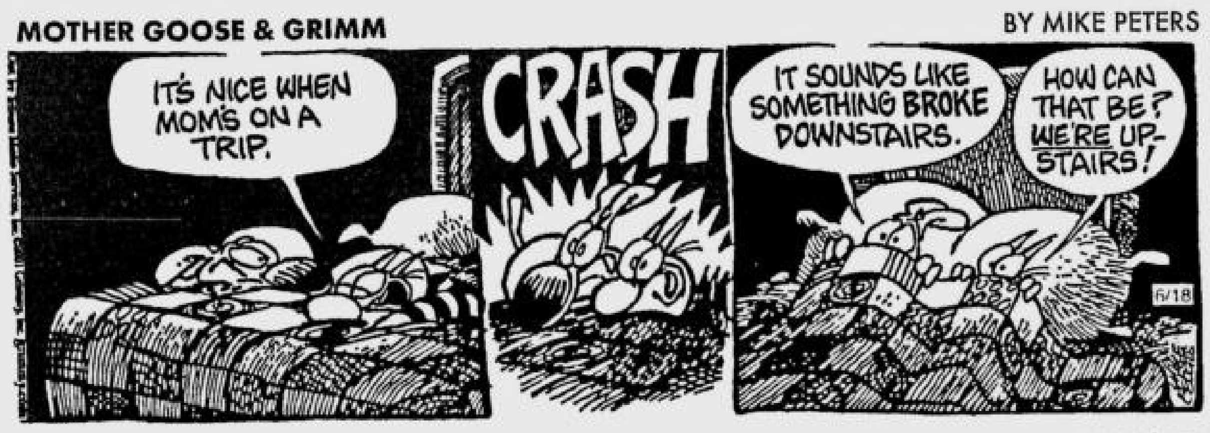
Kung anu-ano na ba ang nakikita mo? Gutom lang 'yan! Mabuti pa,
pumunta ka na sa pinakamalapit na Jollibee store at tikman ang kinababaliwan mong langhap-sarap!

Ngayon, may bagong Jollibee stores para sa inyo:
Gaisano Center, Bogo • SM Super Center Sucat • One Mercedes Plaza, Pasig
Davao Bangkerohan • Davao Makro • Pioneer, Mandaluyong • Manggahan, Pasig • Banlic, Cabuyao • Waltermart, Gen. Trias

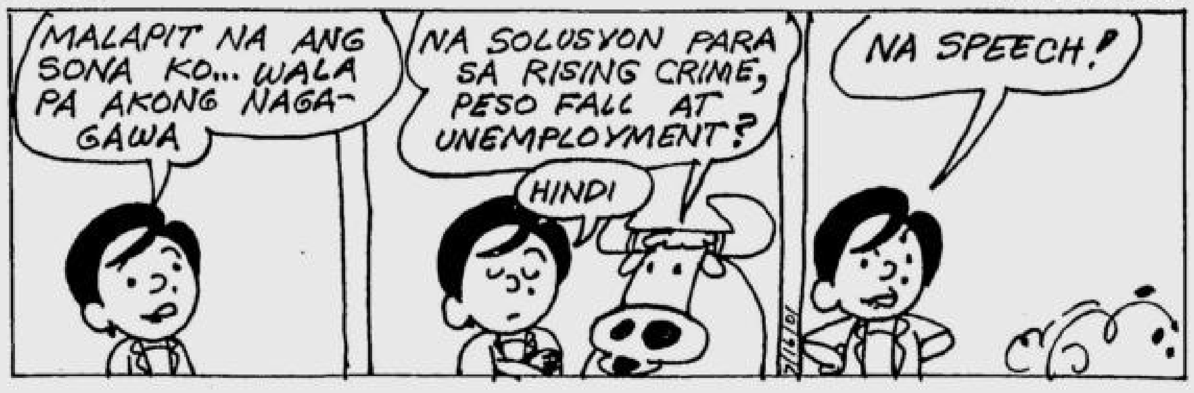
Kahit saan lumingon, may langhap-sarap doon!

Jollibee

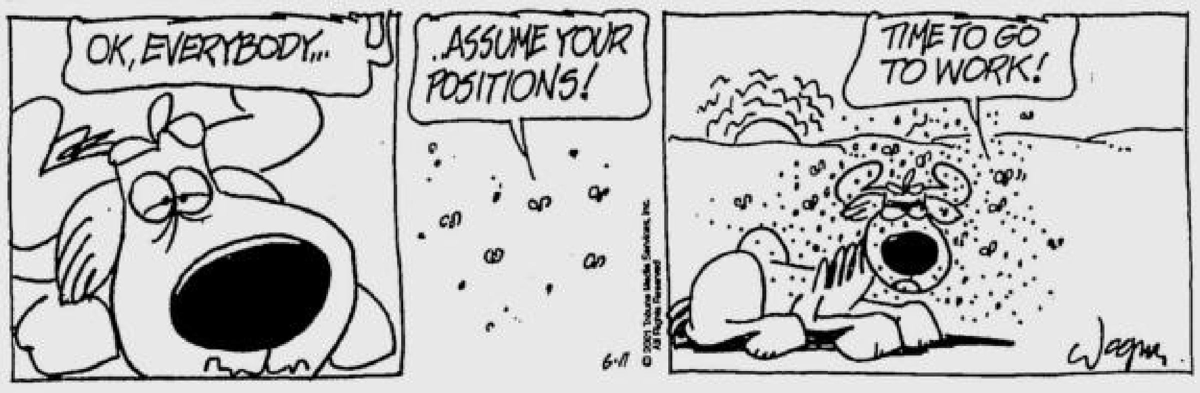
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM BY MIKE PETERS


IT'S NICE WHEN MOM'S ON A TRIP.
CRASH
IT SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING BROKE DOWNSTAIRS.
HOW CAN THAT BE? WE'RE UPSTAIRS!
6/18

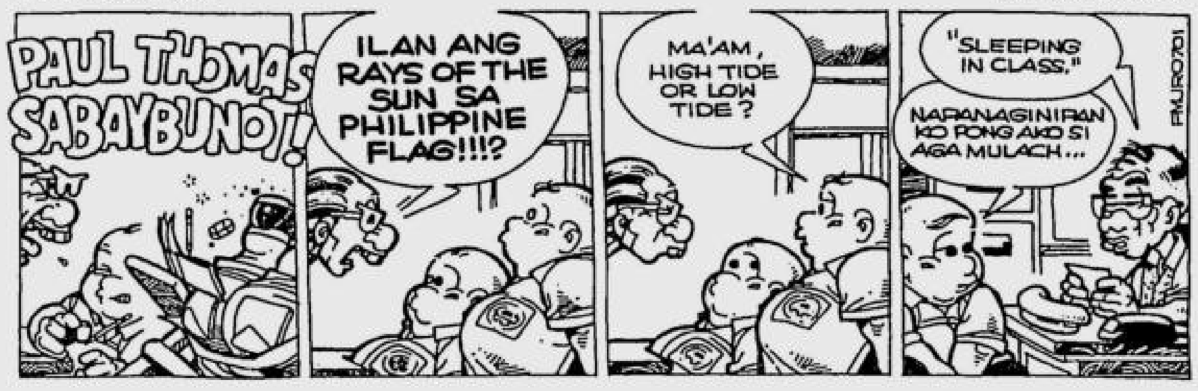
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


MALAPIT NA ANG SONA KO... WALA PA AKONG NAGAGAWA
NA SOLUSYON PARA SA RISING CRIME, PESO FALL AT UNEMPLOYMENT?
HINDI
NA SPEECH!
7/16/01

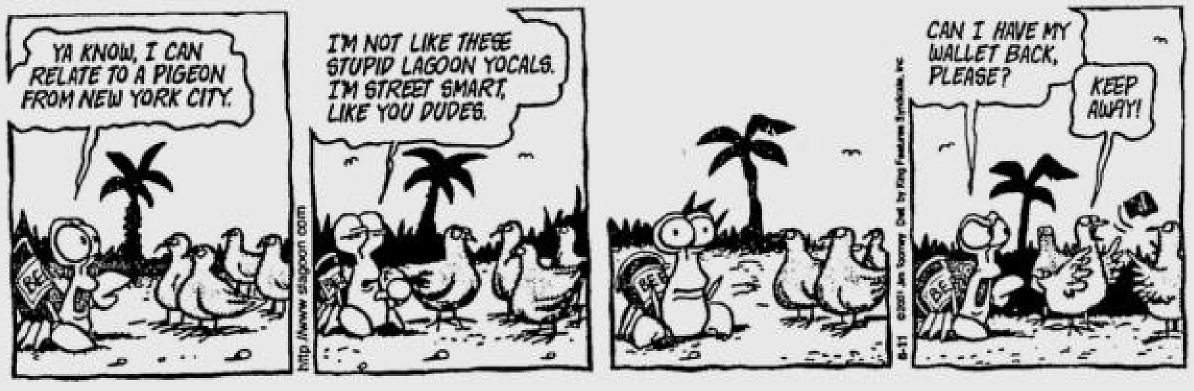
ANIMAL CRACKER BY FRED WAGNER


OK, EVERYBODY...
...ASSUME YOUR POSITIONS!
TIME TO GO TO WORK!
6-11
Wagner

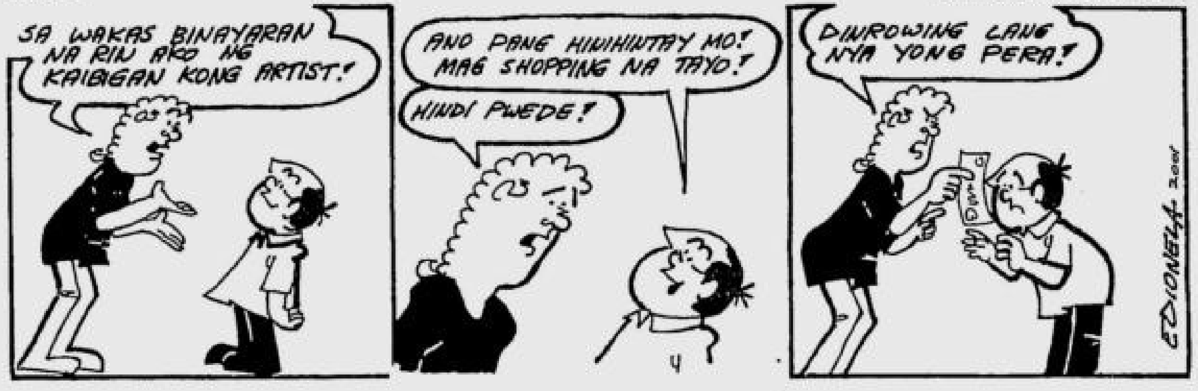
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


PAUL THOMAS SABAYBUNOT!
ILAN ANG RAYS OF THE SUN SA PHILIPPINE FLAG!!!?
MA'AM, HIGH TIDE OR LOW TIDE?
"SLEEPING IN CLASS."
NAPANAGINIPAN KO PONG AKO SI AGA MULACH...
PMJR0701

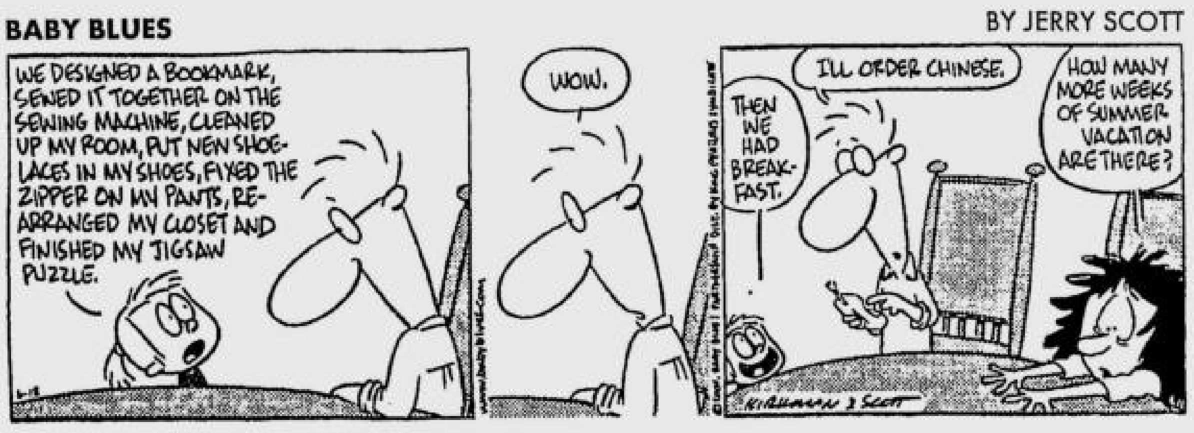
SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY


YA KNOW, I CAN RELATE TO A PIGEON FROM NEW YORK CITY.
I'M NOT LIKE THESE STUPID LAGOON YOCALS. I'M STREET SMART, LIKE YOU DUDES.
CAN I HAVE MY WALLET BACK, PLEASE?
KEEP AWAY!
http://www.slagoon.com
6-11

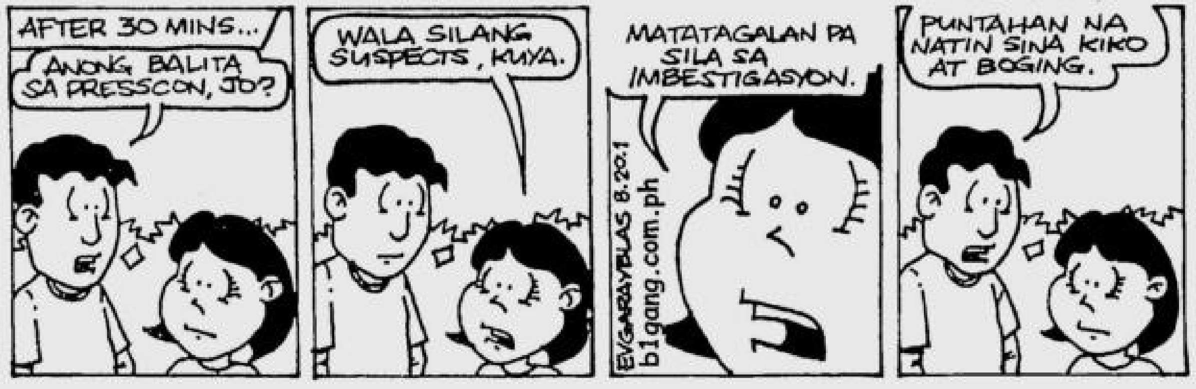
SIMO BY EDGAR DIONELA


SA WAKAS BINAYARAN NA RIN AKO NG KAIBIGAN KONG ARTIST!
ANO PANG HINIHINTAY MO! MAG SHOPPING NA TAYO!
HINDI PWEDE!
DINROWING LANG NYA YONG PERA!
EDIONELA 2001

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


WE DESIGNED A BOOKMARK, SEWED IT TOGETHER ON THE SEWING MACHINE, CLEANED UP MY ROOM, PUT NEW SHOE-LACES IN MY SHOES, FIXED THE ZIPPER ON MY PANTS, RE-ARRANGED MY CLOSET AND FINISHED MY JIGSAW PUZZLE.
WOW.
THEN WE HAD BREAKFAST.
I'LL ORDER CHINESE.
HOW MANY MORE WEEKS OF SUMMER VACATION ARE THERE?
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

B1 GANG BY ATS11/ JEA/ FEVG


AFTER 30 MINS...
ANONG BALITA SA PRESSCON, JO?
WALA SILANG SUSPECTS, KUYA.
MATATAGALAN PA SILA SA IMBESTIGASYON.
PUNTAHAN NA NATIN SINA KIKO AT BOGING.
EVGARAYBLAS 8.20.1
b1gang.com.ph

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Phoebe Cates, Stewart Copeland, Corey Feldman, Ruben Blades, Pinchas Zukerman, Barry Sanders

Happy Birthday: Your desire to do things properly and your stable approach will enhance your reputation with peers. It will lead to a leadership position and the chance to implement your well-conceived ideas. The more you put out this year, the more you will get back in return. Your numbers: 5, 11, 18, 25, 33, 41

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You will want to watch how much you spend. You should be careful not to give too much to those having a good sob story. Your empathetic nature will be your downfall.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You don't know which way is up. You want it all and yet don't really know where to begin. Think twice before you take action regarding your personal life.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): This is not the time to take chances and you know it. Do some backtracking and see if you can come up with a suitable solution that will help get your life back in perspective.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You can make a difference if you join worthwhile groups, but don't feel that you have to go broke doing so. Expand your circle of friends, but don't spend too much time with those who are likely to be hangers-on. You can't do everything for everyone.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You'll have a problem with your boss if you haven't come to terms with the way you're expected to do your job.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You need to experience the rush of love. The possibilities are present. You just have to get out and start meeting new people. Don't be afraid to join groups that interest you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Financial changes will occur in joint ventures. A legal matter should be left alone until a later date when you are more likely to win. Don't let others talk you into doing things you don't want to do.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): A quiet, intimate evening for two should be on your mind. Don't bring your work home. It will interfere with your personal life more than you think.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Added stress will cause minor illness. Watch your diet. Someone may be trying to outsmart and take advantage of you regarding a project at work. Be careful.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You can make a world of difference to your image if you make some positive alterations to your appearance. You need to feel good about yourself to present yourself well.

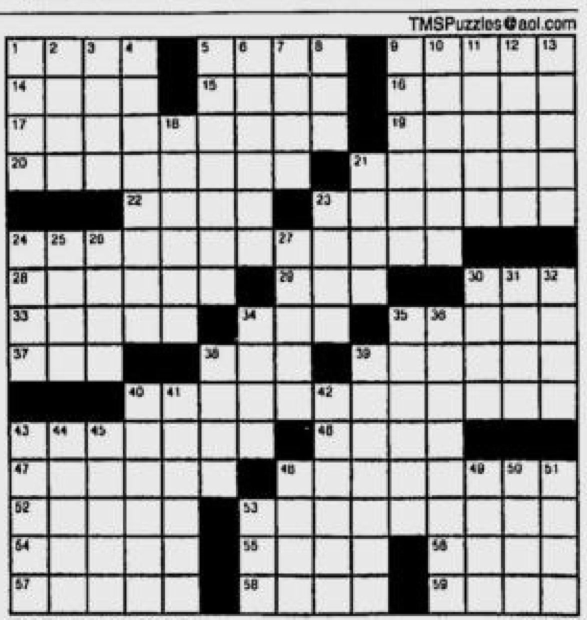
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Changes at home will not run as smoothly as you had hoped. Don't blame the ones you live with. Try to ease tension by looking at the humorous side of the dilemmas facing your family.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You won't want to spend time with someone who has been nagging and complaining. Get out with friends who can provide insight.

Birthday Baby: You are charming, clever and memorable. You have the ability to sympathize as well as find solutions. You are versatile, ambitious and open to all possibilities.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL
5/30/01

ACROSS
1 Dolt
5 Dressed (in)
9 Search party
14 Actress Nazimova
15 Place for cargo
16 Remove fasteners
17 1998 business newsmaker
19 Engender
20 Comparative
21 Drop sharply
22 Continental money
23 Midsection adjective
24 1998 political newsmaker
28 Conan or Pat
29 Cincinnati player
30 Steno book
33 Lindros and Clapton
34 McKellen or McShane
35 Auto style
37 Destiny
38 Business abbr.
39 Hairpiece
40 1998 political newsmaker
43 Head docs?
46 Blue flag
47 Lifting devices
48 Prehistoric period
52 Record over
53 1998 sports newsmaker
54 Fall bloomer
55 In the direction of shelter
56 Easy stride
57 Stands on hind legs
58 Marries
59 Winter transportation

DOWN
1 ___ au rhum
2 "Havana" star Lena
3 Earthenware crock
4 Like Nureyev's moves
5 Mortification
6 Medicated liquid
7 One of the Baldwins
8 Tooth doc's degree
9 Open to all
10 Forward flow
11 Exhausted
12 Blockade
13 Terminated
18 Uses a chisel
21 Invoice stamp
23 Architect of St. Paul's
24 Creative Coward
25 Spanish river
26 Court order
27 Meal prayer
30 Insect stage
31 Mime
32 Woodlands denizen
34 Wayside stopovers
35 Trigonometric function
36 Markets more
38 Pen fills
39 Royal seats
40 Yap or bazoo
41 Comes in
42 Gave ten percent
43 Clip off
44 Cavalryman's need
45 Rope on the range
48 Food fish
49 Off-base GI
50 Open-mouth stare
51 Took a gander at
53 Yammer

SATURDAY PUZZLE ANSWER

L	A	N	A	I	■	O	P	T	E	D	■	N	A	T
I	R	O	N	S	■	C	R	I	M	E	■	A	D	O
P	A	L	I	N	■	T	O	M	S	E	A	V	E	R
■	■	A	S	T	R	A	L	■	■	P	S	A	L	M
T	O	N	E	■	I	V	O	R	Y	■	K	L	E	E
I	R	R	■	B	O	O	N	I	E	S	■	■	■	■
T	O	Y	E	R	■	■	G	N	A	W	A	B	L	E
A	N	A	L	O	G	S	■	D	R	A	G	O	O	N
N	O	N	M	O	R	A	L	■	■	R	E	B	U	T
■	■	■	■	M	I	N	I	M	U	M	■	F	I	E
M	O	A	T	■	D	E	M	U	R	■	L	E	E	R
A	P	R	I	L	■	■	B	R	I	D	A	L	■	■
J	I	M	P	A	L	M	E	R	■	A	D	L	I	B
O	N	E	■	B	E	R	R	A	■	F	L	E	E	R
R	E	D	■	S	A	S	S	Y	■	T	E	R	R	A

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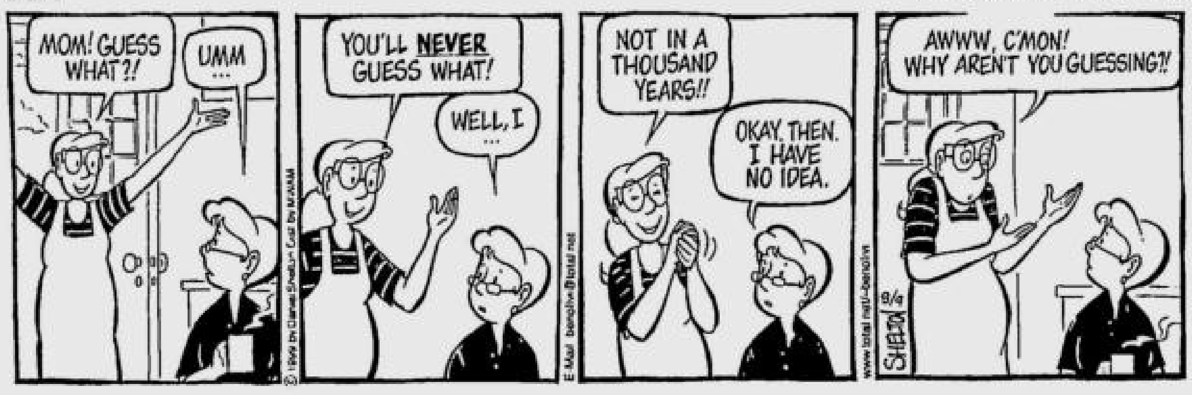
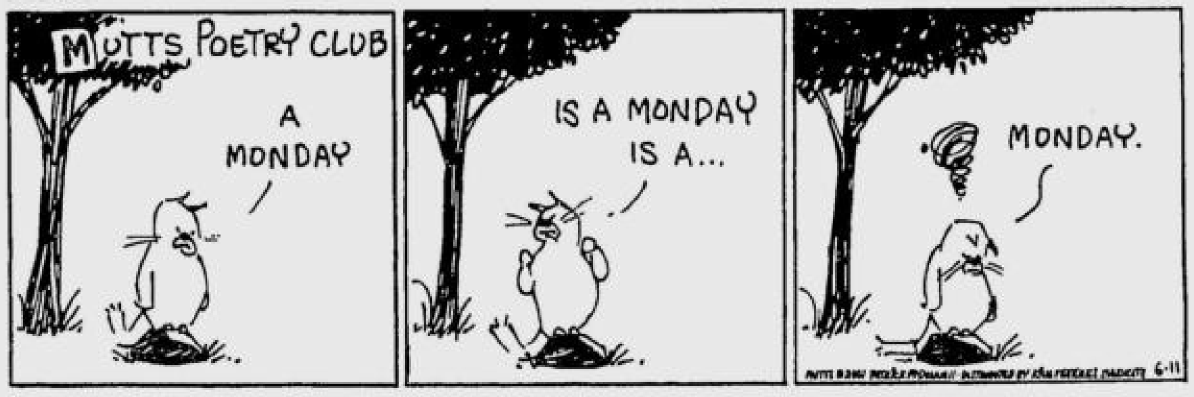
5/30/01

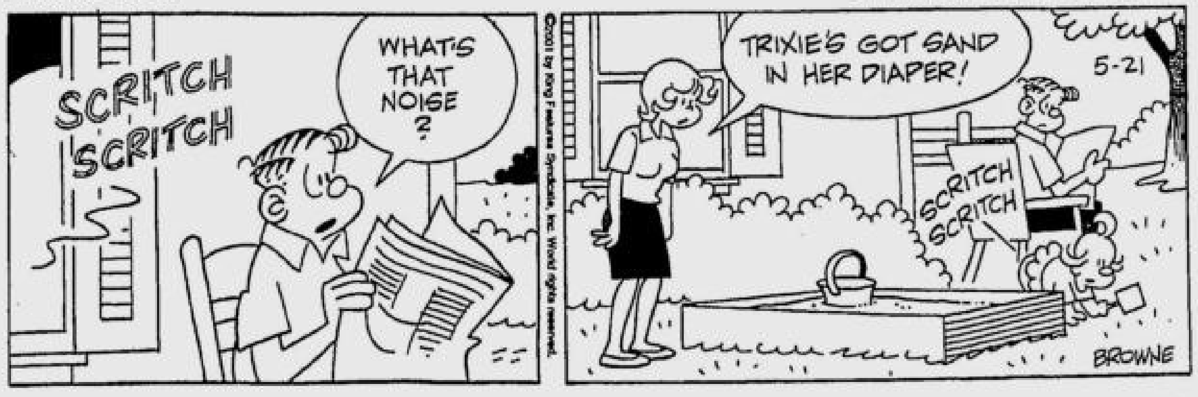
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


MOM! GUESS WHAT?!
UMM ...
YOU'LL NEVER GUESS WHAT!
WELL, I ...
NOT IN A THOUSAND YEARS!!
OKAY, THEN. I HAVE NO IDEA.
AWWW, C'MON! WHY AREN'T YOU GUESSING?!
SHELTON

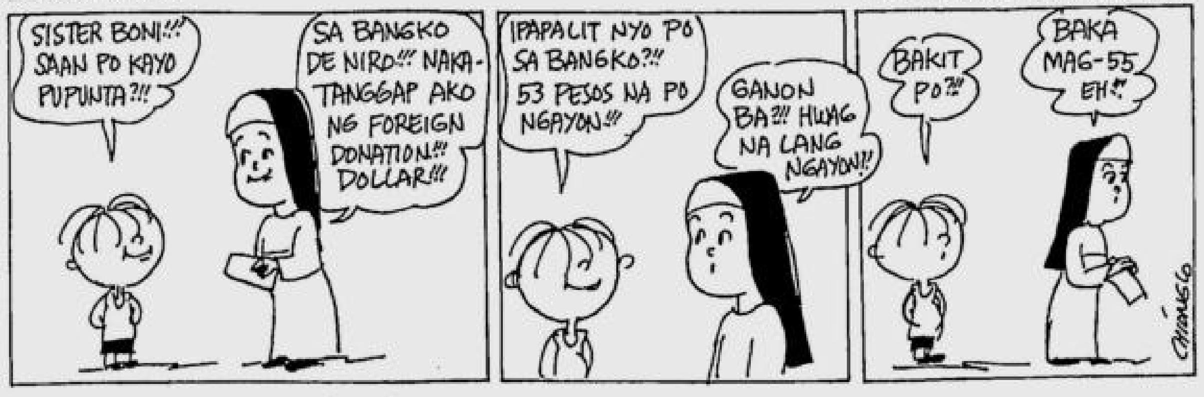
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MUTTS POETRY CLUB
A MONDAY
IS A MONDAY IS A...
MONDAY.
6-11

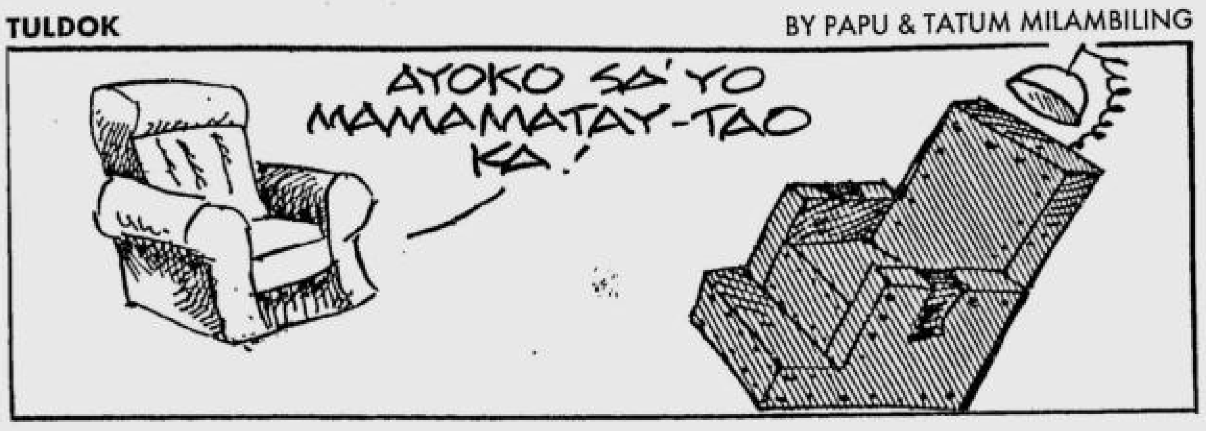
HI AND LOIS BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


SCRITCH SCRITCH
WHAT'S THAT NOISE?
TRIXIE'S GOT SAND IN HER DIAPER!
5-21
SCRITCH SCRITCH
BROWNE

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SISTER BONI!!! SAAN PO KAYO PUPUNTA?!!
SA BANGKO DE NIRO!!! NAKATANGGAP AKO NG FOREIGN DONATION!!! DOLLAR!!!
IPAPALIT NYO PO SA BANGKO?!! 53 PESOS NA PO NGAYON!!!
GANON BA?!! HUWAG NA LANG NGAYON!!
BAKIT PO?!!
BAKA MAG-55 EH!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


AYOKO SA'YO MAMAMATAY-TAO KA!

Our Lady of Nations is Mary co-redemptrix, mediatrix and advocate

PURELY PERSONAL

Josephine Darang

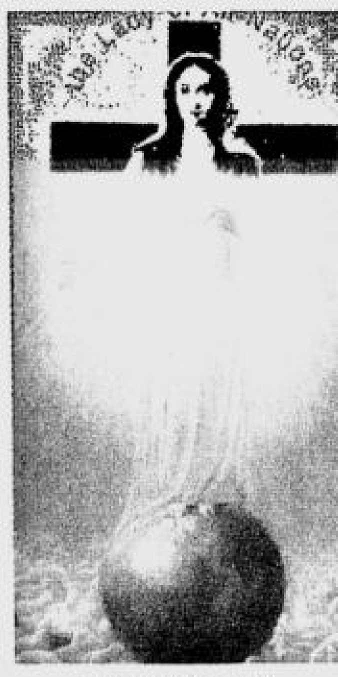
SINCE I became a member of the Militia de Immaculata on May 31, I've been more than spiritually guided to write about the Blessed Mother. For the first time, I am writing about Our Lady of All Nations upon the special request of Marixi Prieto who is a devotee.

The title of Mary as Our Lady of All Nations came about when she appeared to a simple woman by the name of Ida Peerdeman who lived with her sisters in Amsterdam. A series of about 60 apparitions took place between 1945 and 1959.

The first apparition happened on March 25, 1945, the feast of the Annunciation. Here the Blessed Mother predicted the liberation of Netherlands from German occupation on May 5, 1945. In all the apparitions Mary was talking about grace, redemption and peace.

When the dogma of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven was proclaimed in 1950, Mary appeared standing on the globe, as "the Lady, the Mother of All Nations."

On Feb. 11, 1951, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady gave a prayer, which was to be spread all over the world together with her image. The prayer was asking Jesus Christ to send the Holy Spirit now because "this time is our time."



THE LADY of all Nations

Prayer to Jesus Christ

"Lord Jesus Christ, son of the Father, send now your Spirit over the earth. Let the Holy Spirit live in the hearts of all nations, that they may be preserved from degeneration, disaster and war. May the Lady of All Nations, be our advocate. Amen."

When she appeared on top of a globe with the cross behind her, Mary became our co-redemptrix, mediatrix and advocate. She is not anymore Mary, or simply as our mother. She is all three.

Although there was an initial negative reaction at first from the Church, an official approval that she may be venerated under this title was given on May 31, 1996.

Ida Peerdeman passed away at the age of 90 on June 17, 1996. She was just waiting for her work to be finished.

On the occasion of his silver jubilee as a member of the College of Cardinals, Jaime Cardinal Sin held a special prayer and preaching on June 1 at the Manila Cathedral to honor Our Lady of All Nations. The solemn High Mass took place at 12 nn.

Those who want to obtain prayer kits can fax request at The Lady of All Nations office at 844-5572. Available are prayer booklets and novena (P5), "The Key to the Triumph" (P5), "This Time is Our Time" (P10), Lady of All Nations poster 28"x28" (P15) and prayer cards at 50 a box (P15). Prayers are in English, Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilonggo and Ilocano.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel feast

CHURCHES dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel will celebrate her feast today (July 16). One such church is Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Project 6. Parish priest is Fr. Jun Apalisoc. Cardinal Sin will celebrate Mass at 10:30 a.m. My good friend Eric Catipon is a lector there.

400 readers and requests to the Divine Mercy

OUR column yesterday triggered 400 text requests asking the Divine Mercy for help. The girls at Mario Somera's shop were busy copying them on paper, so they can be sent to the Eucharistic Apostles of the Divine Mercy in Cebu. Melissa Villavicencio and Pacita Uyson will ask the community there to pray over them. Those who need help can text Mario Somera at (0917) 382-4674.

"The Miracles of the Divine Mercy" compiled by Mercy Lotilla-Asencio is available at National Bookstore. Published by JesuMaria Publishing House in General Santos City, it is also available by calling telefax (083) 552-4113 or the Manila office at 418-05117/5119.

If you have your own miracles to tell, e-mail Mercy Lotilla-Asencio at mclaa.gsc@weblinq.com.

Those whose prayers were answered through the prayer requests sent to Mario Somera can e-mail me at josiedpurely@yahoo.com.

School children need benefactors

FR. Gilbert Reyes sent me an SOS for his graders at the Nuestra Señora de Guia Parochial School in Magallanes, Cavite. The children are too poor to afford school. Can we help? Can we adopt one child each and give them tuition money?

Please write Father Gilbert at the above address or call his parishioner Emmie Hernandez at 523-811 during office hours. Thank you for your kindness.

Marian pilgrimage in the Philippines

ROBERT Sycip, son of Washington Sycip, told me it was sad that we do not visit the Marian shrines in our own country. It will be good news for him to know that the Mission Society of the Phils. (MSP) is organizing a tour of historical churches and Marian shrines in Laguna on Aug. 4.

To be visited are Nuestra Señora de los Angeles (Sta. Maria), Nuestra Señora de Candelaria (Mabitac), Nuestra Señora de la Natividad (Pangil), Our Lady of Guadalupe (Pagsanjan), Immaculate Conception (Luisiana), San Isidro Labrador (Calauan) and San Pablo Cathedral (San Pablo City).

Fr. Manuel Jadraque Jr. is pilgrimage chaplain.

For more information, call 752-36-88, (0917) 993-3549 or e-mail pcioaquin@hotmail.com or Aissa Bautista at (0917) 428-2440, 563-8436 (from 6 p.m. onward) or e-mail gingbautista@hotmail.com.

Palawan priests mark 25th anniversary

PALAWAN is not only a tourist spot. It boasts of an active vital church community that takes care of 500,000 people, some of whom live in remote barrios and far-flung islands.

Seven priests celebrated their 25th anniversary on July 11 at the San Jose Parish Church in San Jose, Puerto Princesa, Palawan. They are Msgr. Edgardo Juanich, Fr. Zoilo Deslate, Fr. Armando Limsa, Fr. Pepito Rollo, Fr. Romulo Javares, Fr. Antonio Nopasa and Fr. Hernane Denolo.

The seven priests studied theology at the St. Joseph Regional Seminary in Jaro, Iloilo. They were ordained on July 11, 1976.

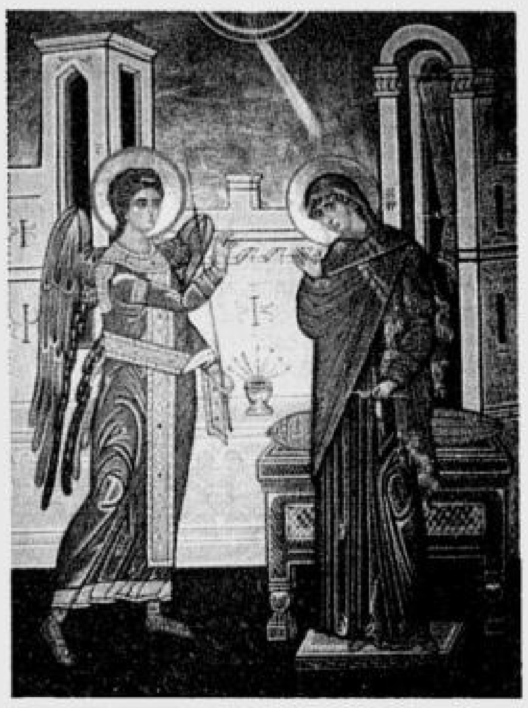
Loving Hands exhibit

NANETTE Kinnes Stamper, wife of the resident manager of Hotel Inter-Continental in Athens, Greece, is in town to exhibit her works at the Loving Hands of Joseph and Mary Foundation dinner at the China Bistro on July 19. She brought 15 religious icons she painted herself. Beneficiary is the foundation, which is soon opening the Ephesus Home for abused children in Guiguinto, Bulacan.

'Alchuete' tree planting in Cagayan

THE CIRCULO Cagayano Foundation headed by Zenaida Carmona-Santos recently launched the tree-planting project of the Kababaihan ng Cagayan in Tuguegarao.

Planted were seedlings of the *alchuete* named after Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez who hails from Isabela.



THE ANNUNCIATION by Nanette Kinnes Stamper

Helping Carmona-Santos in this project are Luz Sabas and Gloria Singson Araullo.

Operation Bukol

THE PENTAMED Group of Hospitals is holding free screening and operation of myomas, ovarian masses and propapse at the Outpatient Department of the Cardinal Santos Medical Center until July 31, 8 a.m.-12 nn and 1-4 p.m. Please call 727-0001.

Our Lady of Manaoag

THE PILGRIM image of Our Lady of Manaoag is now in San Sebastian Church in Famy, Laguna.

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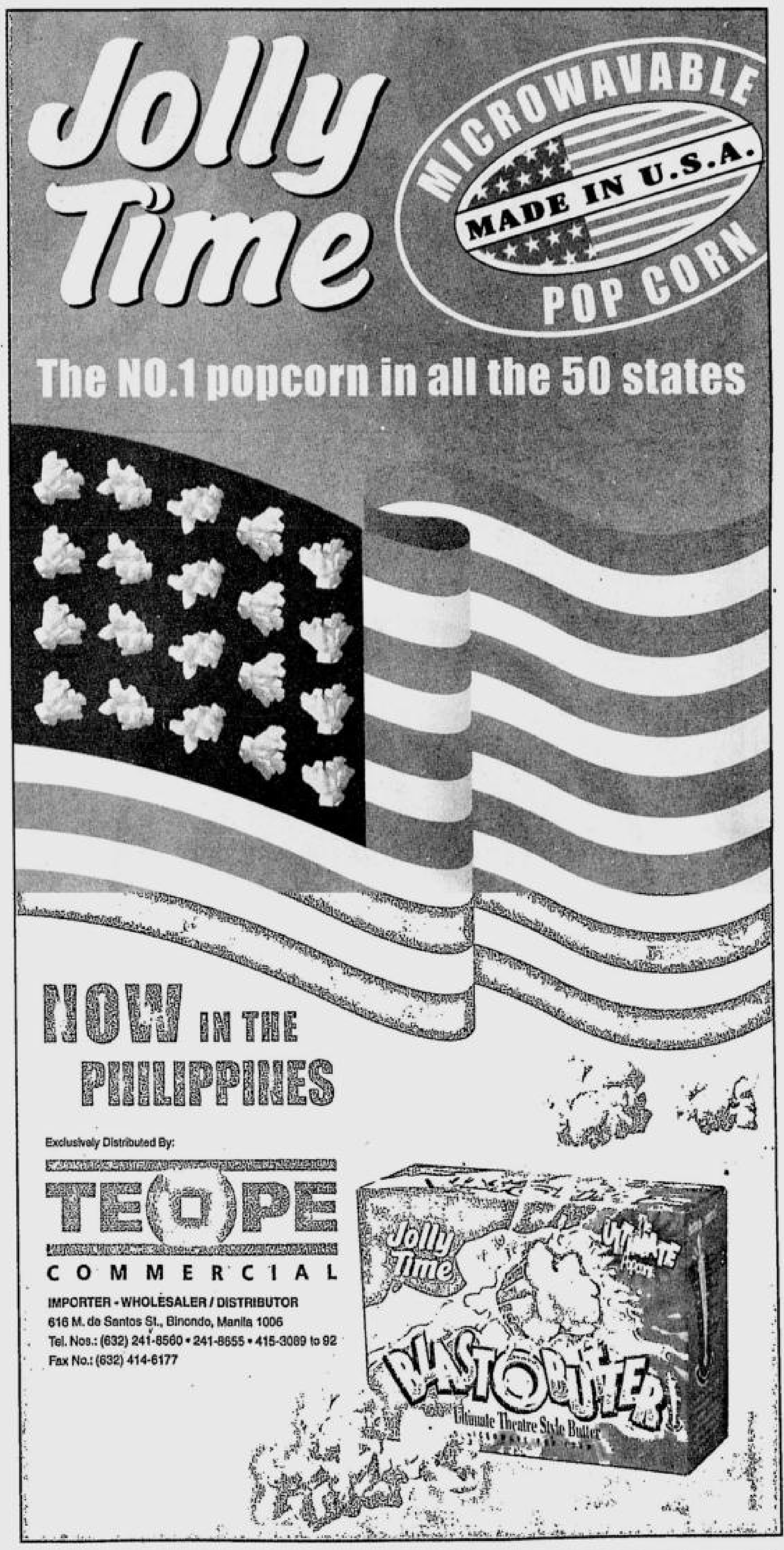

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Women hold regular gab fests–but about Shakespeare

A WEEKLY SERVING OF BOOKS. Bibot Amador throws an idea on the table.

By Cora Llamas
Photos By Betoy Johnson

ZENEIDA Amador, the founder of Repertory Philippines, just might be doing some of her best directing offstage. And not in a theatrical sense, either. Instead of directing actors in interpreting their respective roles, she guides minds and ideas. A comfortable living room lounge serving as a temporary classroom every week takes the place of the rehearsal hall. One thing that remains the same is the sacred text of literature—Amador uses books as springboard for the discussion of ideas that eventually give way to a more in-depth, practical discourse on life.

Learning can even be more fun with friends and colleagues

Put up by Amador and resident hostess Marot Moreno about 12 years ago, the Literature Club in Forbes Park has been encouraging women to engage in what many lament as "the lost art of reading." True to form, the first books in the first years were the old, reliable well-loved classics (Greeks and Shakespeare). The growing club of readers also plunged into the heavy, hard-to-read stuff that disturbed some and provoked others, triggering a lot of intense, interesting debates: Tomes written by Emile Zola, Victor Hugo, Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Franz Kafka, just to name a few.

Eventually, the readers turned to the modern, from the bestsellers to recent award-winning books. Nadine Gordimer and Dave Patterson were among the more popular authors. The choice sometimes depends on the availability of the material; a hard-to-find classic with only one copy carried by a specialty shop would be difficult to include in the list. Club members do have to get their own copies, read the book at home, make the necessary notes and then bring their thoughts to the weekly roundtable.

Shopping spree

Once in a while, the entire group goes to PowerBooks to see what they would all like to read and buy copies on the spot.

Most members are homemakers who are also top professionals and or businesswomen: Ellie Cabarrus, Angela del Rosario, Priscilla Diwa, Susan Ong, Mary Rufino and Sally Villaroza. The others are deeply involved in charity or socially concerned work, such as Amalie Azanza, Bernadette Paterno, Matilde Valdez and Judah Liu. Marilou Tuazon Guingona is the director of the White Cross Orphanage.

All of them have become voracious readers who try to encourage their own kids at home to read. The more enthusiastic ones even take time off from their busy schedules at work to spend a few hours of informed discussion at Moreno's residence.

Del Rosario, who runs her own travel agency, is one of the veterans who graduated from the classics to the contemporary. The habit of regularly reading a book—and sharing thoughts and ideas about it with others—opened for her an even greater world made up of societies, customs and characters different from hers. She believes that the tough-to-read classics have a message that has to be heard today.

"Because these heroes and characters are placed in unusual dilemmas, we see them making choices

WOMEN/ p.E5

BIBOT Amador and hostess Marot Moreno

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CARLO Orosa plays Nicodemus, the wise tutor of Jewel.

The new 'Little Mermaid' promises to be tighter, shorter but grander

BY CORA LLAMAS

THE STORYLINE will flow smoothly like water, announced Freddie Santos with all the power and grandiloquence that his onstage alter-ego, King Argo of Aquatica, could muster.

The message at Trumpets' presscon a few weeks ago was clear enough: The new version of last year's major musical, "The Little Mermaid," promised a tighter plot and shorter running time, without relinquishing any of its visual spectacle.

The eye-popping elements of the production design were among the most stunning seen on Philippine stage in recent years. The curve of a curtain opened to unfold an enormous galleon sailing on sea. Through clever light tricks and the steady hoisting of an actress "swimming" toward the ceiling, the fathoms of the deep appeared to alternately compress and expand. What was apparently designed to appeal to the children in the audience were the cavorting sea creatures of every shape, size and color imaginable.

The kids—and their parents—were enthralled. But not all the cute, cuddly sea horses on stage could stop many of them from falling asleep when the running time dragged on for about three hours. Meantime, the grown-up audience struggled to harmonize some of the inconsistencies in theme and plot. The well-intentioned attempt to infuse the grim Hans Christian Andersen tale about a mermaid and her unrequited love for a human prince with the Christian gospel of salvation left a lot of holes. With whom Prince Christian (the symbolism an obvious giveaway) really in love: the mermaid Jewel or the human princess Sapphire? And why was Jewel so enamored of the "world above" when the undersea world appeared to be more attractive? And why did this little mermaid want so much to possess a human soul that could love and care, when she was pampered with these by friends and family?

"We did take note of audience reactions and comments," Santos acknowledged. "The feedback of the press in particular helped a lot in shaping the new script. The message is clearer now." Santos remained quiet for a second, then suddenly bellowed in a mock tantrum, "But they cut out one of my songs!"

THE NEW/ p.F2

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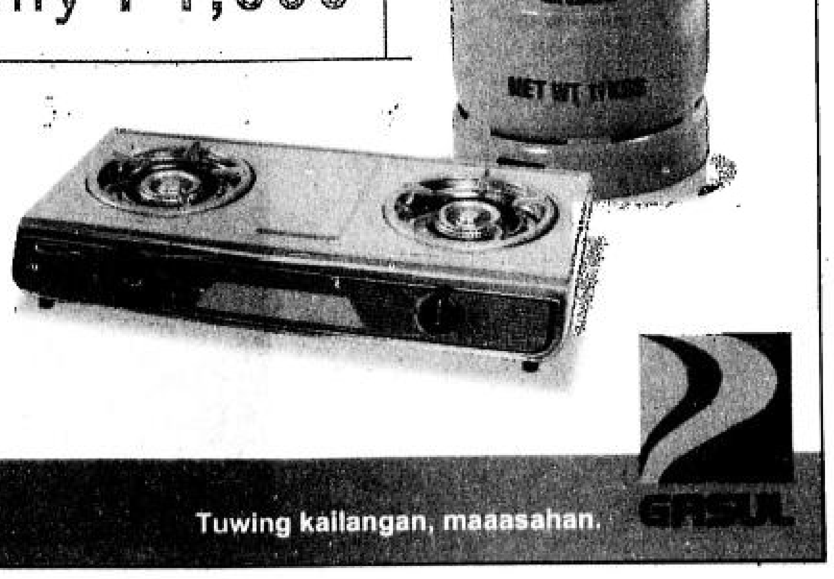

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Unravelling the CCP FAS box-office champ—and flop

BY PABLO TARIMAN

THIS weekend, as pianists Ingrid Sala Santamaria and Reynaldo Reyes brace for their Northern Luzon debut in Ilagan, Isabela on Sunday for an evening of Grieg and Tchaikovsy concertos, I am also briefed about the coming CCP outreach concerts of baritone Jonathan Zaens and cellist Willy Pasamba, along with pianist Mariel Ilusorio, violinist Gina Medina and flutist Antonio Maigue in the Southern provinces.

It is a coincidence that while I was seated with CCP artistic director Corazon Inigo and Performing Arts head Dennis Marasigan and with CCP's ex-employee Della Besa lingering on the other table, soprano Kit Viguilla, who will close the Filipino Artists Series (FAS) season in November, chose to sing Mozart's Vengeance Aria (from Magic Flute) and delivered those stratospheric notes with relish and boy, were they clear as a bell.

Other artists in the FAS series also gave a sampling from their instruments (Pasamba, a Bach Prelude; Gina Medina, a Brahms Scherzo; Ilusorio—a Liszt-Paganini keyboard dazzler), all of which elicited positive nods from the media.

Merits and weaknesses

So what are the merits of this series and its inherent weaknesses? (Marasigan asked me what reward or satisfaction I got after 15 years of covering the FAS concerts and I must say the rewards were few and in between and so was the excitement.)

The merit (or perks) of this series is that Filipino artists get free venue, free posters and free ticket printing on top of free marketing and modest fees to boot (most of the time, they don't even cover cost of air tickets if the artists came from abroad). As for its weaknesses, I guess the basic one is that CCP has to improve its marketing and promotions as shown in the dismal audience count in the last five years of the series (To illustrate, Oscar Yatco and Nena Villanueva were only heard by 110 people in 1996 and only 29 of that number actually bought tickets.). But lo and behold! Jonathan Zaens in the year 2000 is box-office champion with 334 in the audience (out of 400 Little Theater seats. In my book, Zaens was also the most exciting of the batch).

> CCP has to improve its marketing and promotions as shown in the dismal audience count in the last five years of the series

If it is any consolation, the number of FAS subscribers rose from 10 (in 1996) to 49 (in 1997) to 80 (in 1998) to 104 (in 1999) and to 121 last year. Whether these subscribers actually watch concerts or were persuaded to buy is another story.

JONATHAN Zaens

In this age of skyrocketing prices and terrible traffic, concertgoers will only leave their homes if there is some excitement in store for them. Others will be obliged to watch simply because the artist is a friend and a neighbor. In some cases, a marketing plan simply fails because some FAS choices don't encourage audience attendance even if tickets are given away for free.

When you come to think of it, it is the musical taste of the FAS screening committee against the concertgoers at large.

But, according to Inigo and Marasigan, other factors being considered in the hiring of artists for the FAS series are cost and availability. So even if the artist is good but costs a fortune and is not available, the committee probably settles for the less expensive yet available but not necessary brilliant ones. CCP only realizes the repercussion of this choice when there is unbearable silence from the box-office phones.

Better audience count

True, even unbankable classical artists need exposure and subsidy (if the concert results in deficits—as it often does—for all box office-unknown performers). That is the only way they can share their talent with the arts scene. But since they are not bankable and not fully known to the music circle at large, CCP should exert more effort to promote what the artists have to offer and the kind of programming they are capable of. I rely on the papers to find out what's going on and most of the time, I hear of a good recital days after it happened.

FAS need not be too friendly to media persons but if they can extend basic courtesies to people who have spent half their lives covering the CCP beat, they will get better results in the media. The trouble is some people in the FAS committee not only make life miserable for the artists but also for persons who make that contact with quality artists possible by sowing intrigues between them.

By way of unsolicited advice, some Filipino artists I want heard in the series are classical guitarist Michael Dadap (married to violinist Yeou-Cheng Ma, sister of top cellist Yo Yo Ma), baritone Nomer Son and cellist Victor Michael Coo. I am sure that there are others equally qualified for the series.

Now, can I look forward to a better audience count when the new FAS series opens on July 31 with Zaens and company?

Here and there

Classical guitarist Michael Dadap and her violinist wife, Yeou-Cheng Ma are in town for concerts in the Visayas. Both are involved in the Children's Orchestra Society (COS) which performed in Manila in the mid-'90s. Yeou-Cheng Ma is a first prizewinner of a national violin competition in France (where she was born) and is now hooked on rondalla music. The good news is that the couple have open concert slots in Manila on Aug. 2-6. Those who want to sponsor this special concert may call cell phone 0919-3716198.

Although the name Music News and Features appears in the flyers, posters and solicitation letters related to the July 14 Philamlife concert of a Chinese soprano, let it be clarified that said concert was actually a production of the singer's family who is into the distribution of industrial products. Any official inquiry on taxes that should be paid in relation to this concert should be coursed through this family, and not to Music News. The souvenir program used in the concert was originally conceived as an opera folio focusing on the history of opera in the Philippines. The souvenir program used in the concert—minus the table of contents and staff box—was an unauthorized version of that music magazine. The omission of the photo of soprano Andion Fernandez and its replacement with a photo of this unknown singer is also unauthorized tampering of the story which is about the old and new generations of opera singers in the country. Although the family paid for the printing cost and editorial services of that program, it was not authorized to revise the editorial format and edit photos to suit the publicity of the soprano who was not mentioned in that particular story. We still believe that an artist's credentials are earned, not bought or manufactured. We suggested the name Manila Festival Orchestra for this ensemble that accompanied the singer. But for the record, this orchestra does not exist as a regular musical ensemble or as a business organization. We help and encourage promising artists only if the talent is worth honing. I am in awe of Chinese artists, from pianists Fu Tsong to Li Jan and violinists Jimmy Lin to Yue Jao and from cellist Angela Lee to singers from Nomer Son to Fu Jan to Liang Ning, but this particular aspiring singer is definitely not in their category, musically and intellectually. I found this out when we watched Terence McNally's "Master Class" and all I got was a puerile reaction and not even a thank you for treating them (for free) to this play which is about Maria Callas and what the art of singing is all about.

The new 'Little Mermaid' promises to be tighter, shorter but grander

(From page F1)

The over-all cut totaled to a staggering 15 pages, according to Luna Inocian, who co-wrote the script with director Jaime del Mundo. "We had to emphasize the difference between the sea kingdom and the human world, between the people with immortal souls and the undersea creatures who are basically animals with instincts and loyalties but cannot love."

CAROL Banawa as Jewel

THE CAST of "The Little Mermaid"

Self-sacrifice and true love

In short, notwithstanding the charming, phantasmagorical display of light, sound and costume that would be thrown our way by scenographer Mio Infante and company, basically, it seems that this latest Aquatica is a darker, more forbidding place to visit. Lest anyone forget, even in last year's romp, those lovely mer-friends of Jewel lured starry-eyed sailors to their deaths in the depths of the sea and stole their immortal spirits. Along with smiling starfish, mindless, gray-colored drones walked the palace halls, too.

But then again, the original Andersen tale on which the play is based—and not on the Disney movie, just to get the record straight—is a haunting story about self-sacrifice and the price that true love might require. In last year's musical, actresses Sheila Francisco and Lynn Sherman softened the plotting villain Crustacea with some comical bumbling, but the real Sea Witch in the legend was so sinister and ruthless that she gave me nightmares as a kid.

"Love does not exist in Aquatica," Inocian continued. "Argo valued Jewel because she's just the heir to his throne, he doesn't really love her." That explains Santos' deleted song, which in essence was a song of grief over her lost land-bound daughter. "Jewel's quest among the humans is a quest for love—and a soul that could make her [capable of it]."

CAVORTING sea creatures

Love in "The Little Mermaid" also appears in the relationship between Christian and Sapphire, which the creative team says is given more time and development this time around. This budding romance becomes the ultimate test for the newfound humanity of Jewel, who gave up her fins, immortality and all her undersea riches just for the chance—and hope—to win the love of the mortal prince.

Auditions were held again, even for the original performers, to fish out "the abundance of thespic talent we knew was out there," explained Trumpets artistic director Audie Gemora. The new cast is a mixture of the old and the new: the return of most of the original actors, and a couple of new promising discoveries.

The most widely awaited performance obviously is KC Concepcion's. The seldom-interviewed daughter of Megastar Sharon Cuneta takes on the supporting role of Princess Sapphire. Dismissing speculation that Concepcion's part was "pre-arranged," Trumpets insiders said that the 16-year-old actress actually went through the auditions. Without any fanfare or warning, she walked in during the screening process and "gleefully announced that she wanted to audition for any role at all...even a chorus part."

Concepcion wasn't able to make it to the presscon due to an extended photo shoot for an ad, disappointing many who had wanted a glimpse or a photo taken of her.

Formidable cast

Alternating for the lead role of Jewel are Carol Banawa, recording artist and star of TV's "Asap," and Dianne dela Fuente, another protégé of the ABS-CBN Talent Center. Understudying them is Katrina Villarante, a Canadian *balikbayan* whose initial plan to study musical theater and song in the Philippines stretched to several months' stay and a professional dramatic career.

Noel Rayos and Jeff Arcilla return as Prince Christian. Rayos, a Repertory Philippines veteran, is one of the most acclaimed leading actors today with at least 35 roles in his resumé (Romeo in "Romeo and Juliet," Mozart in "Amadeus," Daniel in "Once on an Island," etc.). He was one of the 12 Filipino actors selected to appear in Action Theater's "Chang and Eng," the longest-running homegrown musical in Singapore. Budding actor Arcilla, who regularly crosses over from TV to theater, is also a critically acclaimed singer (Best Inspirational Song Awit Award for theme song of "Wanted: Perfect Mother").

> Trumpets presents the Hans Christian Andersen tale with a clearer message, without relinquishing any of its visual spectacle

Cathy Azanza is the other actress who plays Sapphire. Though not on the same show biz pedigree as Concepcion, Azanza is widely considered as one of the leading ladies in the theater today, akin to a Menchu Launchengco-in-the-making. Asked why the Repertory Philippines ingénue would agree to appear as a supporting character, the true-blue performer replies, "I don't look at Sapphire as a secondary role. One thing I learned from Tita Bibot [Amador, Repertory resident director] is that every role is important—you just find things to do with it."

NOEL Rayos as Prince Christian

The irrepressible squid Calamari are portrayed by two new additions to the cast: Tonipet Gaba, the prince and boy-next-door in many Repertory musicals and comedies; and Eladio Pamaran, fresh from his stage triumphs in Germany ("Miss Saigon" and "The Hunchback of Notre Dame").

Aside from Francisco, Sherman and Santos, another returnee is Carlo Orosa who will once more deliver sage advice to Jewel as Nicodemus, the fallen human, now her wiser, but sadder, tutor.

"The Little Mermaid" will run from Aug. 3-Sept. 9 at the Meralco Theater.

THE STUNNING production of "The Little Mermaid"

The legend returns in Ballet Manila's 'Firebird'

A TOTAL theatrical experience is what Ballet Manila's "The Legend of the Firebird" promises to deliver.

Ballet Manila brings back the celebrated ballet of French-Canadian choreographer Jean Paul Comelin, on July 27-29 at the GSIS Theater.

"The Legend of the Firebird," a two-act ballet, is Comelin's personal take of our own mythical bird, "Ibong Adarna." His work, however, is not an outright retelling of the local story where three princes outsmart each other in the search for the mythical bird whose singing can cure their ailing father. Rather it is the story of a magical bird, an element found in many closures, a creature that has the power to cure illness, bring about wealth and love or guide the successful pursuit of an ideal.

The ballet, as Comelin narrates, is a spiritual piece centering on the quest for true love and the eternal fight between good and evil. It begins with a Shaman (alternately played by principal danseur Osias Barroso and soloist Jeffrey Espejo) entering the world of enlightenment amid a ceremonial celebration in his village. He is guided by the voice and presence of a guardian angel, the Ibong Adarna (played by soloists Aileen Gallinera and Pamela Asprer), who also manifests as the Lotus Goddess (soloist Melanie Motus) and Medusa (soloist Elline Damian) thus comprising the trinity. Guided by the Bird of Paradise, the Shaman searches for love and falls for the Lotus divinity. But to win her, he must conquer the wicked Medusa.

Collaborating with Comelin in this ethno-classical piece is international set and costume designer Inga Borg. A former ballerina herself, Borg has worked with Comelin in many previous ballets abroad thereby adding "The Legend of the Firebird" in their long list of successful achievements.

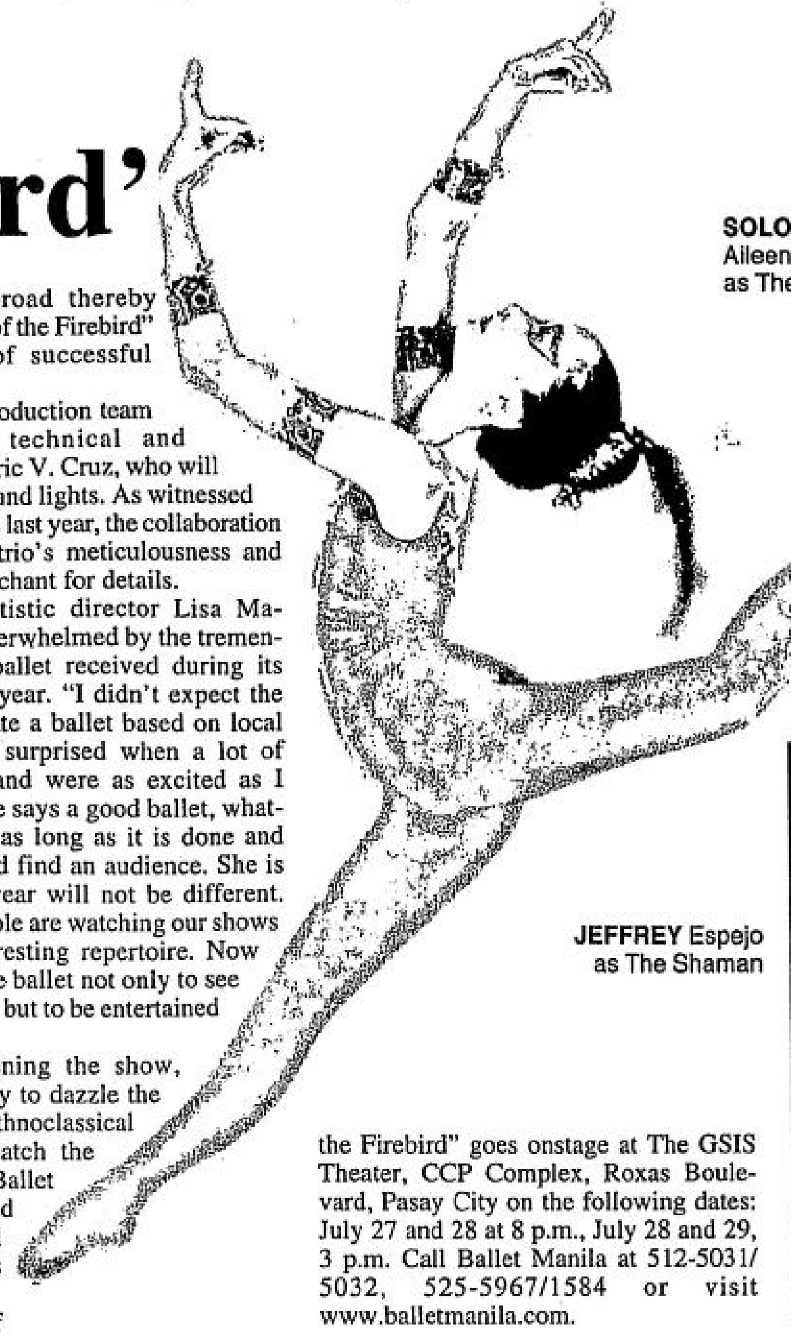
GALLINERA as the Firebird with Elline Damian as Medusa and Melanie Motus as the Love Goddess

Completing the production team is Ballet Manila technical and production director Eric V. Cruz, who will again execute the set and lights. As witnessed by a lot of ballet-goers last year, the collaboration was a proof of the trio's meticulousness and their unwavering penchant for details.

Ballet Manila artistic director Lisa Macuja-Elizalde was overwhelmed by the tremendous response the ballet received during its world premiere last year. "I didn't expect the audience to appreciate a ballet based on local folklore, but I was surprised when a lot of people showed up and were as excited as I was," she muses. She says a good ballet, whatever it is based on, as long as it is done and presented well would find an audience. She is confident that this year will not be different. "More and more people are watching our shows because of our interesting repertoire. Now people go and see the ballet not only to see their favorite dancers but to be entertained by the ballet itself."

With poetry opening the show, costumes and scenery to dazzle the audience, a rousing ethnoclassical musical score to match the energetic dancing, Ballet Manila's "The Legend of the Firebird" will surely deliver its promise.

"The Legend of the Firebird" goes onstage at The GSIS Theater, CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City on the following dates: July 27 and 28 at 8 p.m., July 28 and 29, 3 p.m. Call Ballet Manila at 512-5031/5032, 525-5967/1584 or visit www.balletmanila.com.



SOLOIST Aileen Gallinera as The Firebird

JEFFREY Espejo as The Shaman

Pianist Hila performs in MCO concert

THE MANILA Chamber Orchestra (MCO) Foundation Inc., in observance of its 16th year, will present young pianist Hiyas A. Hila in a special concert on July 23, 7:30 p.m. at the Francisco Santiago Hall.

Her program consists of the following works: Johann Sebastian Bach's French Suite No. 5 in G Major, Ludwig van Beethoven's Sonata in F Minor, Op. 57 ("Appasionata"), Bela Bartok's Suite, Op. 14, Claude Debussy's "Reflets dans beau (Reflections in the water)" from "Images" (first set), Chopin's Nocturne in B-Flat Minor, Op. 9, No. 1 and Nocturne in F. Major, Op. 15, No. 1; and Chopin's Ballade in G Minor, Op. 23.

The MCO Foundation has consistently supported Hila, in keeping with its avowed mission of providing exposure to young budding talents.

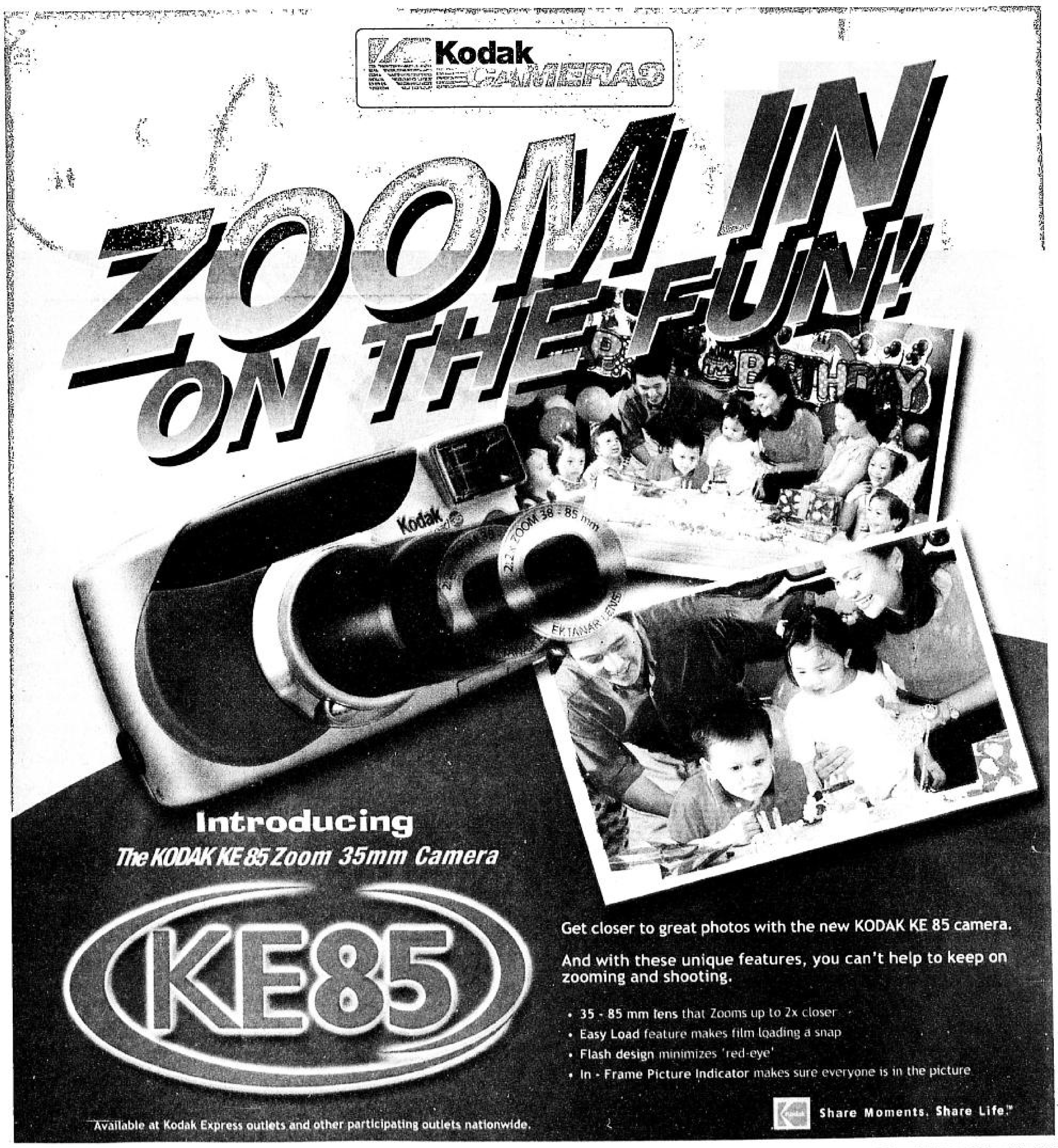
Hila is a junior at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music where she is working on her Bachelor of Music degree, major in Piano Performance, under the tutelage of Prof. Mack McCray. She is a dean's lister having received a grade of A in all her subjects. She also received a departmental award in Harmony last term being the best student in the undergraduate level.

She is slated to participate in the New Millennium International Piano Festival Gijon, Asturias, Spain this August. The festival is being jointly handled by the Juilliard School of Music and the Peabody Conservatory of Music with Julian Martin, chair of the piano department of the Juilliard School of Music, as artistic director.

A graduate of the Philippine High School for the Arts, Hila studied at the UP College of Music for two years before she transferred to the San Francisco Conservatory of Music on a scholarship grant. She won the top prize in several national piano competitions including the Namcya and the PTGP concerto competitions. Her SFCM scholarship grant is complemented by additional assistance from GlaxoSmithKline Foundation, the Sonny B. Reyes Foundation, and the NCCA, Friends of CCP, the Foundation for a Musical Filipino, and other individual sponsorships.

Call 818-1403 or 813-3849.

HILA



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Writers of 'Vagina Monologues in Filipino' live their art

Drawn to the passion of three playwrights to liberate women through their art, the author is humbled by their honesty, accomplishments and sense of community

By Monique Wilson

WHEN I first met Glecy Atienza, Luna Sicat and Joi Barrios at the Asian Women Playwrights Conference in Makiling in December, I was both excited and daunted.

I did not understand why I was invited to speak at a playwriting festival and I was feeling kind of intimidated in such distinguished company. I had read about their plays and book launches in the papers and seen their names over and over again in the list of Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Award winners for literature, playwriting and poetry.

I remember meeting Luna first. We were having breakfast when she mentioned "The Vagina Monologues," and said she would like to try her hand at translating it. I was speechless at first. I couldn't contain my excitement. This was an award-winning poet and playwright and she was so nice and humble.

Luna, an assistant professor at the Department of Filipino and Philippine Literature in UP Diliman, is a multiple Palanca award winner in literature for essays and poetry. Aside from multiple literary Palanca Awards (1996 and 1998), she was also a cofinalist for the Gintong Aklat Awards 2000, Literature Division for "Relasyon: Mga Kuwento ng Paglusong at Pag-alon." Aside from published short stories, essays and poetry, her published plays include "Babae" (1999) and "Maternal" (1997), both produced by UP Repertory Company. Her translation of Ninotchka Rosca's "Ang Aming Apostol Pablo" was also published in 1999.

When I read her paper, her writing moved me. The poetry in her words made me cry.

Her words struck a cord deep inside me. They were painful, empowering and honest. She spoke as a woman. I have never forgotten the impact her words had on me. Powerful and insightful, her words made me think and feel. I remember looking at her and thinking what a deep well her heart and mind was to have such poetry and soul in her words.

LARA Fabregas, Dulce Aristorenas and Tami Monsod

Critically acclaimed

That first morning I also saw Glecy Atienza. I had already met her two years before. We were in Peta's "Operetang Tatlumpera" and spent many moments backstage sharing stories from theater to personal relationships. She is not only a highly experienced actress, having been a member of Peta for many years, but also a gender trainer for Center for Women' Studies of the company's Women's Theater Program. She is a professor, playwright, theme teacher, researcher and artistic consultant. Her writing has won numerous artistic, academic and literary awards and she has published numerous works. She is a senior artist-teacher for Peta and an associate member of the National Research Council of the Philippines. She won the 1999 Gawad Chancellor Award for the Best Published Research Award for "Bangon: Antolohiya ng Dulang Mapanghimagsik."

After I gave my talk and excerpt from "The Vagina Monologues" on the second day of the conference, Glecy came up to me and told me all these fascinating vagina stories and terms used, especially in urban poor communities. I had a great time learning from her about the context of the word vagina for Filipino women, as well as how women's sexuality is perceived in the Philippines.

Glecy really knew her stuff. She had done years of research and advocacy and outreach work with Filipino women. She had also done her M.A. on "The Subversion of Plays during Martial Law of Peta," and her Ph.D. on the "Dynamics of Improvisation in Philippine Political Theater." Being also an admirer of Brecht's plays and the writings of Argentinean theater artist Augosto Boal on political theater, I was captivated by her stories and wealth of knowledge,

One woman who befriended me quite early was Joi Barrios. I remember she was so chatty and friendly. We started talking because she mentioned being a member of Gabriela since her college days. She told me how glad she was that, through the play, we were bringing movements like The Purple Rose Campaign to the fore (the international campaign to end sex trafficking of Filipino women and children spearheaded by Gabriela).

I admired her political activism as she told me her story on how she grew as a feminist, writer, artist, teacher and activist. I was also very interested in her discussion of "Women Playwrights in the Philippines" at the conference. I was all the more enthralled when I prodded her to tell me stories about what her dissertation researches were like.

Like Luna and Glecy, Joi is a recipient of numerous literary awards. She has published books, plays and poetry, and has edited many anthologies. Her plays include "Lorena," "Damas de Noche," "Mail Order Brides" and "Las Viajeras," among others. Joi recently launched her new book, "Prince Charming at Iba Pang Nobelang Romantiko"—a collection of alternative feminist romance novels and essays.

Aside from being critically acclaimed for their creative works, all three women have written papers for national and international conferences, been published in scholarly publications, are actively involved in outreach work and are members of numerous professional, civic and cultural organizations.

During the conference at Makiling, they would share stories about being writers, feminists, political activists, mothers, artists and women playwrights and poets night after night. These opened up a different world for me. Here were women marrying their activism, feminism and artistry with their poetry, literature and plays. I was deeply drawn to their passion to liberate women through their writing and to be a voice for women through their art. I was humbled by their honesty, genuineness, accomplishments, sense of community and generosity.

Driven by sense of others

Once, during the conference, when a playwright came up to them to ask for their creative help with her work, I saw them give her their time, honest feedback and concern as they shared their insights and strategies to help improve the playwright's work.

I had never seen that kind of sharing among Philippine theater groups. While many theater groups claim they are not show biz-oriented like the film and television industries, the truth is it is full of hypocrisy. You'll be surprised with the competition, jealousy and insecurity.

But with these women, I saw real honesty, a confidence in their work which made them so giving, a desire to share. They were accomplished, qualified and extremely talented, always so generous and encouraging. The most important thing was they were driven by a sense of others—they were not "living" their art to serve themselves.

"The Vagina Monologues" eventually became the most talked about topic at the conference. Playwrights from all over Asia asked us to bring the play to their communities, too. Tami Monsod (one of our original "TVM" actresses) also gave a talk and did an excerpt, and it was clear that the women in attendance couldn't get enough of the play. I began to understand why I had been invited. While women writers flourish, few producers take on their works. You also need theater groups to believe in women's issues so that plays about women get produced.

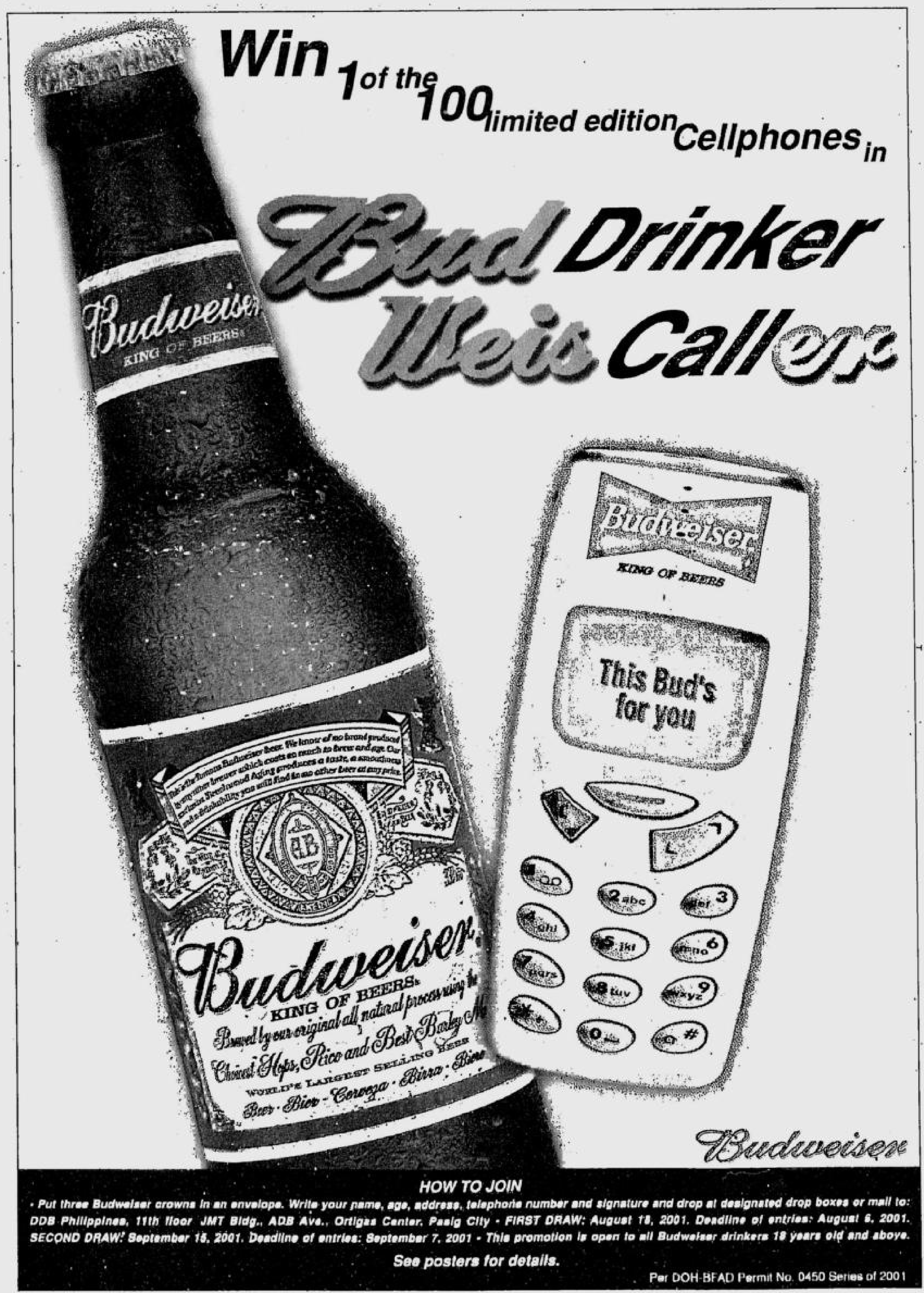
At the conference I was inspired not only to write but to produce more Filipino plays written by our Filipina writers. These women opened a door for me that had remained only tentatively opened for many years. They gave me a more in-depth view of the issues of Filipino women. They inspired me to keep using the theater as a platform to get women's voices heard.

On the final day of the conference, the delegates went to watch one of our "The Vagina Monologues" performances at the Music Museum. That night, though we always had plans to translate the play into Filipino, our visions merged. Glecy, Luna and Joi came on board as our "The Vagina Monologues" translators. I couldn't have asked for a better group to breathe the wonderful poetry of our language into these stories of women.

After months of research and meetings the script was finally ready. As the first draft arrived to me via e-mail in London, I laughed myself silly and wept painful and bittersweet tears as I read the Filipino translations of the monologues I knew so well. They suddenly put everything for me in a Philippine context, in a reality I was familiar with since childhood, in a language full of beauty, eloquence, power and honesty.

"The Vagina Monologues in Filipino" is real, raw, provocative, moving, challenging, beautiful and wonderful. It has given me a different view of Filipino women. It has made me more proud to be one.

The New Voice Company production of "The Vagina Monologues in Filipino" will run at the Music Museum from Aug. 31 to Sept. 15. The play is directed by NVC associate artistic director Rito Asilo and stars theater, film and TV actresses Harlene Bautista, Arlene Borja and Lara Fabregas. Already in preproduction is Joi Barrios' "To be a Woman is to Live in a Time of War (Ang Pagiging Babae ay Pamumuhay sa Panahon ng Digma)," which NVC is producing as part of its 2002 season. Call the NVC Actors Studio at 896-5497/6695 or 899-0630 (telefax) or e-mail nvcpost@hotmail.com.



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NCCA to honor outstanding artists

RECIPIENTS of the first Alab ng Haraya Awards will be honored in ceremonies on July 20 at 6 p.m. at the NCCA Building, 633 General Luna St., Intramuros, Manila. Coming from different fields, they were chosen for their significant contribution to the country's arts and cultural development.

The Alab ng Haraya Award seeks to recognize outstanding pursuits in culture and arts in the previous year.

Among the awardees are: Andres Cristobal Cruz (Opinion/Column), Paulo Alcazaren (Feature Articles), and Pelikula (Journal) for the category on Published Articles on Culture and the Arts/Cultural Journalism or Documentation. The Negros Museum (Arts Management), Douglas Nierras for "Metanoia" (Choreography in Dance), Davao City Public Library (Library and Information Services Program), "Isang Hudyat Panimula" and "Luna: An Aswang Romance" (Production), Myra Beltran for "Daughters of Necessity" (Individual Recognition) and Filipinas Heritage Library, adaptive reuse (Cultural Conservation).

The Dangal ng Haraya, which is Alab ng Haraya's Lifetime Achievement Award, will also be conferred. It is a special tribute for individuals and organizations that have bequeathed lasting innovations to Philippine arts and culture.

The awardees for this year have selflessly given their time and efforts to the various areas of cultural development: conservation, management and promotions. Recipients of the award are individuals who have made their mark in historical and cultural research. The Dangal ng Haraya is given to the progenitors, not only of artistic creation or cultural breakthroughs but, more important, of Filipino selfhood.

This year's recipients of the Dangal ng Haraya are: Jesus T. Peralta (Cultural Conservation), Danny Dolor (Cultural Promotions), Felice Prudente Sta. Maria (Cultural Management) and E. Arsenio Manuel and Isagani R. Medina (Cultural Research).

Call the Alab ng Haraya Awards Secretariat at 527-2192/95 local 602, 527-2191/94 or email info@ncca.gov.ph.